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Binning, Rowan

THE DEVELOPMENT OF COMMON WORSHIP

IN THE PRIMITIVE CHURCH

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THE DEVELOPMENT OF COMMON WORSHIP

IN THE PRIMITIVE CHURCH

WITH

SOME SUGGESTIONS AS TO ITS SIGNIFICANCE

FOR COMMON WORSHIP

IN

THE UNITED CHURCH OF CANADA

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requirements for the Degree of Bachelor of
Divinity of the University of Alberta.

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1.
FOREWORD

The subject of this essay is the Development of Common Worship in the Primitive Church. Certain suggestions will be made as to the significance of this development for the ordering of common worship in the United Church of Canada.

The thesis advanced is, briefly, that out of the rites of the Chaburah suppers, probably shared by Jesus and His followers on various occasions, the last of which occasions is described by the Evangelists in their account of the Last Supper, the primitive Church developed her principal weekly service of common worship. This has passed into the use of the Catholic Church under various names, i.e, the Mass, the Eucharist, the Holy Communion, the Lord's Supper. Throughout its history, and in spite of much elaboration and ornamentation, the rite has retained the essential pattern given it by the primitive Church.

In order that the argument may be understood clearly, it is desirable at the outset to indicate more precisely what the subject is intended to include. The reasons for so doing will appear more fully as the discussion proceeds.

1. The word "Primitive" is used by various writers to designate periods in the history of the Church



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differing greatly in length. Many writers mean by it the first three centuries of the Christian era. P.G.S. Hopwood (1) limits it to include only the years between the death of Jesus and the conversion of St. Paul. This essay is concerned with developments in what otherwise might be called the "New Testament Period." This period is taken to begin with the life and ministry of Jesus and to end about the year 125 A.D.

The early years of the Church's history were years of rapid, continuous, many-sided and often unexpected development, as men of various races, with differing cultural, linguistic and religious equipment made their contributions to the phenomenal growth and elaboration of the Christian community with its various enterprises, among which worship always occupied a place of major importance. The records are far from adequate, and certainty about many points of interest is impossible to attain. Further, as in any era of maximum change, standardization was almost unknown. It was a time of experimentation, of the proof of many things and the holding fast of only a few. What is visible in the history of worship is the outline of a form emerging through

(1) -The Religious Experience of the Primitive Church.

many forms, or a general formlessness, and even that outline is far from clear in its details. He who looks for certainty **here** will not find it.

2. It is "Common Worship" with which we have to deal. It is neither "Public Worship" in our sense of worship to which anyone who cares to do so may come, nor "Private Worship" in the sense of the devotional life of individuals practised in solitude. It is the worship of the Christian communities, carried on often in secret for fear of persecution, always for the glory of God and the benefit of believers or those under instruction. "Public" services to which people not of the fold might be admitted there may have been, but of them we have ~~no~~^{little} evidence.

(1) This fact that worship was of believers and for believers will be seen to have certain effects both upon the form and content of the service and upon the preaching which was part of it.

3. The considerations stated above will in effect limit our discussion to the worship which centred in and grew out of the celebration of the Lord's Supper, or, as it came to be called, the Eucharist. We know al-

(1) - See Dix: The Shape of the Liturgy p.16
I Corinthians xiv:23-25 may refer to such a gathering

most nothing of other types of Common Worship in the primitive Church. It is reasonable to suppose that there were gatherings for informal prayer, and meetings in which believers fulfilled the Apostle's injunction to speak to one another "in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord." (1) There may have been services designed for what we would call "evangelism," to which strangers were brought. But of all this nothing definite is known. Our knowledge centres almost entirely about the observance of that which was to become the major rite of the Church in all succeeding centuries. To trace its emergence and growth, to seek some of the sources of materials embodied in it, to indicate its abiding meanings and its capacity to satisfy the legitimate and continuing necessities of the faithful in their common worship, and to point to certain implications of these conclusions for the practice of the United Church of Canada in our day: This is the task essayed in the following pages.

(1) - Col. iii:16.

I. The Religious Experience of
the Primitive Church

The Christian community appeared in history as a company of people united by their belief in Jesus of Nazareth as the Christ of God. They were convinced that, in response to their faith, God had poured out upon them the Holy Spirit. As a result of this out-pouring the Christian exhibited a particular quality of life marked by enthusiasm, joy, inward peace and power. This quality of life made him different from other men and drew attention to him. (1)

It was this new life which Christians themselves regarded as the proof of the reality of their experience of God through Christ.

"It might be manifested in various ways at various times, but perpetually and to all generations of Christians in every age and clime this God-given Spirit was a morally redemptive power identical with the mind of Christ, an indwelling disposition to faith, hope and love, but supremely love. Whoever had this as the well spring of his life had the witness in him." (2)

This power had been manifested in the life of Jesus. It has been remarked by many that the earliest Gospel (Mark) lays special emphasis upon the deeds of Jesus, His miracles, the signs and wonders wrought by

(1) Acts ix:2; xix:23; etc.

(2) B.W.Bacon: The Story of Jesus - p.10.

Him. These were accepted as tokens of the power that was in Him, and He Himself ascribed that power to the presence of the Kingdom, working already in His own person.(1) Later on His followers traced their own spiritual energy to the activity in them of the same power of the Kingdom that they had witnessed in Christ. Paul could refer to it almost indifferently as the Holy Spirit or as the Spirit of Christ. (2)

The historic occasion of the Spirit's out-pouring was, of course, Pentecost. It is unfortunate that so much attention is focussed upon the unusual and external incidents connected with that event and with subsequent manifestations of the Spirit's coming upon groups of believers, that the inward and underlying spiritual processes are, too often, unrecognized. It is these latter which are all-important.

"The windlike noise is lost in the dim distance, the tongues as of fire extinguished, the ecstatic speech no more heard. These are only the accidentals of the great experience, having no permanent quality, their significance infinitesimal for the extraordinary spiritual and moral consequences of Pentecost."
(3)

The gift of the Spirit was accepted as evidence of God's response to an act of faith. By faith the believer was enabled to appropriate the significance of Jesus' death

(1) Matt.xii: 28 etc.

(2) Romans viii: 9.

(3) P.G.S.Hopwood: Religious Experience of the Primitive Church - p.151.

and resurrection. That the Messiah should be given up to the Cross had always been unintelligible to His followers. The resurrection brought the beginning of understanding. Entrance to the Kingdom demands complete surrender to its law, the law of love. The measure of the will's surrender to that law is the measure in which spiritual power comes from God into the soul. This is a fundamental law of spiritual life, and Pentecost is one expression of it.

This spiritual energy is, of course, in some measure contagious, but its true realization in any individual soul was recognized to be in some way a direct result of his perception of the significance of the death and resurrection of Jesus for him. Here we encounter the difficulty that among Jewish Christians there must have been serious obstacles to their ascribing salvation to the forgiveness of their sins through the death of Christ. Paul could trace the atoning power which he knew to the Cross of Christ, but it appears that at least for some years Christians in Jerusalem continued to attend services in the temple, thus, presumably, participating in the ancient form of sacrifice for sin. Very much later the writer to the Hebrews feels impelled to remind his readers that the Sacrifice on Calvary has made all other sacrifices futile and unnecessary. However, these early believers

must have been aware that the death of Jesus was in some way connected with their experience of forgiveness. There would be at least some feeling of personal responsibility for His death, occasioned by the traditional notion of the solidarity of the Jewish people, so that each recognized some share in the guilt of all. Repentance for this must have come with realization of the new meaning given by Jesus' teaching, death and resurrection to the conceptions of the Messiah and the Kingdom, whose imminent advent could now be expected.

The situation must have been different among the Gentile converts. They had not come into the fellowship of the new Faith from any experience of sacrifice offered on behalf of all members of the national group. Among them the individual was seeking each his own soul's salvation, and he found reconciliation with God through the Lord Christ who had died for him and risen again. The death of Jesus occupied a more prominent place in the inner experience of Gentile converts than of Jews, and we shall have to note that this difference had its results in the development of the content of ~~the~~ common worship.

But, whatever the differences in the inner experience, its outward manifestations were everywhere the

same. The "fruits of the Spirit" bore an identical character from Jerusalem to the Pillars of Hercules. A sharpening of the intellectual powers resulting in enhanced wisdom, more acute discernment and better judgment; increased sensitivity to the guidance of God's indwelling Spirit; heightened moral powers; a new courage, strength of will, and certainty of faith; unexpected eloquence and added persuasive powers; a unique perception of the meaning of love; these as well as visions, ecstasies, healings, tongues, marvels and fore-tellings, are everywhere marks of the Spirit's working. Radiating through it all was the Christian's joy in his Lord. It is significant that Paul writes of joy far more often than he does of love, for those in whose hearts infinite Love has had its way must of necessity rejoice.

It was inevitable that this experience should seek expression in worship, and that the worship should share the quality of the experience. Those to whom God had been so gracious were compelled by their own overflowing hearts to pour out their gratitude and praise before Him. Those whom Christ had redeemed could not but offer Him their adoration for the matchless beauty of His life, the majesty of His self-sacrifice, the wonder of His resurrection, the reality of His presence and power.

An inner necessity compelled them to renew continually their pledges of willing loyalty. Living as they did in conflict with the world and their enemies, beset by difficulties of many kinds, they sought the comfort and strength of fellowship with the believing community. There they found the guidance of God through the reading and study of the Scriptures. From the first they used the sacred writings of the Jews. To these were added, as time passed, distinctively Christian writings, by selection from which the New Testament was finally compiled. The readings were interpreted for them by the wise counsel of their elders in the faith. In their worship, as in other things, they did not so much deliberately decide what to do; they were driven by the Spirit acting through the conditioning circumstances of their time as a compelling influence in their souls. The Spirit made them.

Spirit-controlled worship would of necessity be free worship, for one could not bind the Spirit within the limits of fixed forms. Long after forms have developed and been recognized as possessing some degree of authority, we find liberty given to the "prophets" (those in whom the presence of the Spirit is especially evident) to lead the worship as they see fit. "But suffer the prophets to hold Eucharist as they will." (Didache) (1). Freedom,

(1) See Appendix C. p -108

however, did not mean license, and want of form did not bring as its consequence poverty of content. In spite of tendencies to over-value the unusual manifestations of spirit-activity, the cautious counsel of the Apostle prevailed. Release from the bondage of the Law could not be interpreted as lawlessness, for "the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets" (1) While the gift of tongues was to be recognized as an authentic evidence of the Spirit's presence, the gift of sane and helpful utterance was to be thought of as much more precious. Further, the Spirit operated through the minds of the worshippers, and these minds were in most cases stored with remembered materials accumulated through training in the Jewish faith. The aspirations of the great souls of the old dispensation had found noble utterance, and this devotional treasure now became the inheritance of the Church, and all unconsciously in the Church's infancy set the standard of literary quality for prayer.

The early freedom had moreover these two advantages:

1. It gave flexibility to the worship so that it could be adapted, as it was, to the needs and aspirations of all sorts and conditions of men.
2. It allowed fullest opportunity to the creative capa-

(1) I Corin. xiv: 32.

cities of successive generations of Christians. Each brought his own peculiar contribution to the growing wealth of devotional material available for the common use.

The same inner compulsions that drove Christians to worship required them to worship together. Hardman has given his judgment that -

"The most striking characteristic of the Church's worship in the first three centuries was the fellowship from which it sprang and the corporate action with ~~which~~ it was offered." (1)

The worship assemblies of the primitive Church were the centres from which other activities emanated and were directed. Matters under discussion in the community were settled there. Help for those in need was brought to the assembly for apportionment and distribution. The first office-bearers of the Church were those concerned with the ordering of its worship, (2) and very largely through the exercise of responsibility there they acquired the authority which later came to be recognized as belonging to the various orders of the ministry. Worship was accepted from the beginning as a supreme duty as well as a highest privilege of the Church, but the worship assembly was not only the church at prayer but the church at work

(1) Hardman: History of Christian Worship - p.4

(2) Acts vi: 1-6.

and the church giving direction to its work. Not a little of the strong sense of community in the primitive churches was due to this fact that the various charitable enterprises, from the care of the poor and sick to the sending forth of missionaries, were inseparably associated with the common worship. Work and worship thus became two phases of one offering made by His Church to God, and the work acquired by association something of the high dignity inherent in the worship, The worshipper as he offered his praise could not be unmindful of needs in the community which called for practical expression of his charity.

But it was inevitable that the time of enthusiasm should pass, for the human mind cannot sustain indefinitely the inner pressures of such acute excitement. These periods have their value in lifting mankind to a higher level, upon which preparation may be made for a new ascent--although too often it seems as if in the course of preparation there is a descent almost to the level occupied before --but they do not endure for long. The day came when the conception of the Spirit lost its primary place in Christian thinking. Instead of being thought of as the controlling factor in all the Church's life, the idea of the Spirit became associated with ordinances such as baptism, the laying on of hands, and other rites. By the end of the first century the conception had arrived that the Spirit

is transmitted through officers appointed by the Church. In other words the Spirit is now subordinated to the Church (1).

There was a corresponding development in worship. The increasing size of congregations resulted in growing need for organization and for the apportionment of definite degrees of responsibility among appointed officials. In this new situation it was as important that a man have gifts of management as that he be powerful in prayer or in prophecy. Men of affairs took the place of men of the Spirit, and the bishop rather than the prophet assumed the leadership of worship. Prayers tended to assume fixed forms. Uniformity began to appear, not merely in the practice of a single church, but in the worship of groups of churches. The Church had, however, in no sense lost the consciousness that she is the creator and master of the form, not its servant.

Some slight consideration of Baptism (2) is appropriate at this point, as the rite takes its place within the area of Spirit-experiences. It takes its place there as a private rite rather than as a form of

- (1) On this development see especially Hopwood, (op.cit.) and MacDonald, A.B.: Christian Worship in the Primitive Church.
- (2) On this see especially MacDonald (op.cit) Chap.xiv. pp.174 ff.

common worship. There is surprisingly little evidence concerning baptism in the primitive period. It is agreed that the rite was not instituted by Jesus and that it acquired its Messianic significance through association with John the Baptist. Probably because that prophet had made it a sign of the individual's readiness for entrance into the coming Kingdom, it was regarded as a suitable symbol of the inner preparation wrought by Christ in the souls of believers. That baptism was not always associated with the gift of the Spirit is evident in the story of Philip and the Ethiopian eunuch (Acts. viii: 36-39). But usually it was so associated and three stages in the conception of this relationship may be discerned:

1. In Acts x: 44~~ff~~ "baptism by the Spirit" is regarded as sufficient ground for baptism with water.
2. In Acts xix: 1-6 baptism with water in the Name of Jesus provides the setting for the out-pouring of the Spirit.
3. In Acts viii: 4-8, 12-17 baptism with water is given, but the gift of the Spirit occurs with the laying on of the hands of the Apostles. The Spirit-gift has become a pre-rogative of the inner collegium.

There is no certainty as to how the rite was administered, although even a slight knowledge of the character of Palestine, a country in which water has always

been scarce and for the most part drawn from deep wells, where rivers and pools are few and far between, does not incline one to accept easily the view that it was by immersion. The word βαπτίζω does not need to mean more than "to wash," (1) and it is not necessary to dip an object completely into water in order to wash it. There is little likelihood that in the primitive Church there would be any inclination to place sufficient emphasis upon a matter which would be regarded as secondary to make it obligatory that any particular method be used always. There is no evidence that the water was regarded as having in itself any power to convey a grace, nor is there any very trustworthy information as to whether anything but a most elementary confession of faith was required of candidates. It is not even certain that only adults were given baptism, as we hear of the baptism of a whole household at once (2). It is, in fact, not too much to say that the mind of the primitive Church was not more definite upon the subject than is the mind of large sections of the Protestant Church to-day!

(1) See Liddell and Scott, or any good Greek-English Lexicon.

(2) Acts xvi:15.

II. The Beginning of Christian Worship

"The first thing to be discovered regarding the setting and substance of an act of worship is its history."

These words of Dean Sperry (1) serve to set the task of this and the two following sections, - to endeavour to uncover the roots from which the form and content of the worship of the Church developed; to trace the growth ~~in outline~~ through the primitive period; and finally to indicate in briefest outline what has happened to this form of worship through the centuries since.

The first Christians were Jews, and it is a fair assumption that they were devout persons, keenly and intelligently interested^{ed} in the religion of their fathers, or at least sufficiently interested in it to be dissatisfied with it. The first record we have of a company of Jesus' followers worshipping together outside the temple is in Acts 1: 14, in the account of what occurred in Jerusalem from the Assension until Pentecost. After Pentecost the company, increased by many converts, but still predominantly Jewish in race and wholly so in religious background, continued to worship in Jerusalem. They main-

(1) Reality in Worship - p.212.

tained, moreover, their participation in the worship of the temple (1), a fact which would seem to indicate that they regarded themselves as little more than a reformed sect within the ancestral system. Since this tendency persisted in Palestine, it is not surprising that the most rapid development of distinctive Christian forms took place among the Gentiles.

But elsewhere than in Jerusalem and for a considerable time Christian communities remained in close contact with the Synagogues. It seems that almost everywhere the first converts were either Jews or proselytes to Judaism, and it was but natural that their new experience should find expression through forms and terminology drawn from their Jewish inheritance, invested now with new meaning. The note in Acts vi: 7, "and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith," suggests interesting possibilities of the influence of those who were experts in Jewish worship upon the formation of the common devotional life at least of the Jerusalem community. It would probably be a conservative influence, tending to hold Christian practice in close harmony with Jewish.

It is evident that a determining influence must

(1) Acts ii:46; iii: 1 etc.

have been exercised by Judaism upon the new ways of worship as they did develop. Oesterly (1) has pointed out that the influence was so strong even among the Gentiles that the main elements of synagogal worship were early adopted, and that when Christianity was finally severed from Judaism, much of the content of the Sabbath worship in the synagogue was transferred to the eucharistic service of the Church.

It is surprising that so little is known with certainty concerning the content of temple worship, but it is agreed that the ^{at}adaption of the temple liturgy by the synagogue took place while the temple was still standing. (2). It is thought that by the middle of the first Christian century it was customary that there should be three daily services in the synagogue, in each of which the two primary elements were the reading of Scripture and prayers. Lections from the Pentateuch were read on Mondays, Thursdays and feast days; while on Sabbaths and feast days a passage from the Prophets was read as well. The reading was in Hebrew, immediately followed by a translation into the vernacular and by an explanatory exposition. Any male

(1) Oesterley: Jewish Background of the Christian Liturgy - p.100

(2) Oesterley op.cit. p.73.

Israelite was entitled to read the lessons. The Shema and the Decalogue formed part of the daily services, which by this time seem to have included also the Psalms, arranged for each day in the week, chanted antiphonally by precentor and people. The invitation to the congregation to begin the chant was "Hallelujah," and their response at the conclusion the "Amen." It is thought also that some form of the "Sanctus" was in use. Two benedictions preceded the reading of Scripture and one (at the evening service two) followed it. Prayer probably included confession and prayer for pardon, with prayers for grace, although there seems to be no certainty on this point (1).

At first Christians seem to have been content to continue to participate in the services of the synagogue, and their presence there was tolerated by the authorities (2). In Palestine this continued for some time. Elsewhere the break with the synagogue came early. Then either one of two courses might be followed: 1,- as at Ephesus⁽³⁾, another place of meeting was secured; 2,- as at Troas⁽⁴⁾, the worship was conducted in a private house. In either case, as will be seen more fully later, what was done was to appropriate the substance of the synagogue service and add to it a supper rite, the distinctively Christian element in the worship. In Palestine the supper rite was ob-

(2) ACTS XVII: 10-12 ETCL. (3) ACTS XIX: 8-10 (4) ACTS XX: 7 ET.

(1) On synagogue worship generally see Cesterley, op.cit.

served in private homes, in the evening, at which hour worship seems also to have taken place in the Church among the Gentiles. It began in both areas apparently as daily worship, and for a long time there was no tendency to exalt that occurring on the first day of the week over that of any other day. There seems never to have been any thought of equating Sunday and the Sabbath, and as time went on it was inevitable that the Sabbath should cease to have any special significance. This might be assumed to have been the case from the beginning among the Gentiles. By the end of the first century it appears that the first day of the week (Sunday) had come to be regarded as especially suitable for the worship, though it by no means follows that worship was confined to that day. As time went on, and the supper rite ceased to be a meal proper, there arose the custom of observing it in the morning, a change which may have been due in part to the fact that it was more convenient and safer for many Gentile Christians to attend at an early morning hour than at any other time of the day. It is interesting to reflect that the early Church had no hesitation in making a feast which was originally a supper a morning rite, in the double interest of securing the attendance of the greatest number and of maintaining the secrecy necessary in an era of perse-

cution. (1).

The two circumstances,--that the experience of the redeeming love of God in Christ draws believers together with a strong consciousness of community, and that the Church went among the Gentiles already possessing a superior rite as her distinctive form of worship,--were to prove profoundly influential in determining her future as a world-religion. It was a world in which people were seeking desperately for fellowship.

"In the blank wilderness created by a universal despotism, the craving for sympathy and mutual succour inspired a great social movement, which legislation was powerless to check In the face of that world-wide and all-powerful system, the individual felt, ever more and more, his loneliness and helplessness. The imperial power might be well-meaning and beneficent, but it was so terrible and levelling in the immense sweep of its forces, that the isolated man seemed, in its presence, reduced to the significance of an insect or a grain of sand..... When the brotherhood, many of them of servile grade, met in full conclave, in the temple of their patron deity, to pass a formal decree of thanks to a benefactor, and regale themselves with a modest repast, or when they passed through the streets and the forum with banners flying, and all the emblems of their guild, the meanest member felt himself for the moment lifted above the dim, hopeless obscurity of plebian life."(2).

The secular historian here describes a condition which must have made the close fellowship of the Christian community an inviting prospect to many a lonely citizen of

(1) On this development see MacDonald op.cit.

(2) Dill: Roman Society from Nero to Marcus Aurelius-pp.255-56.

the ancient world. A hunger for religious certainty, widely felt, was added to this seeking for companionship.

"There was in the ancient world a hunger and thirst for communion with the divine and for salvation, which prepared the way for the entrance of the mystery-cults from the East, and which also confronted Christianity with a demand for the satisfaction of its longings; and the challenge could not be refused. Christianity had something to give very different from what the cults of Serapis, Attis or Mithra could offer; it had a 'salvation myth' which was rooted in the firm ground of history, an intenser religious devotion than any other cult, and a stronger ethical savour than Mithraism." (1)

It is perhaps unnecessary to deal now with the proposition once argued with considerable enthusiasm that the Christian sacramental rite was created by absorption from the Pagan Mysteries. The terminology and thought forms of the mystery rites were part of the cultural environment in which the new Faith developed, and it would be natural to find them utilized to some extent in Christian circles. But in its extreme form the theory that the Christian sacraments were created by appropriation from the Mystery Religions has been effectively disposed of by many scholars and is no longer seriously advanced. Hislop

(1) Briloth: Eucharistic Faith and Practice - p.50.

summarizes thus:

"This explanation is unnecessary, ignores history, and can offer no evidence of a contemporary pagan mystery from which the Christian rite could be borrowed." (1)

The Gentile Church was subject always to the pressure of pagan ideas, and while there is no evidence of the existence of Mithraism in a developed form until the second century, by which time the Christian sacrament had taken shape, there is little doubt that ideas and aspirations associated with the Mysteries were part of the cultural atmosphere in which Gentile Christianity evolved. But it has been remarked already that Jewish influence remained very strong even among the Gentile churches, and the worship was constantly under the restraining and purifying power of those elements drawn from the synagogue. Jewish Christians would not be hospitable to pagan infiltrations. It is almost certain that the effect of pagan pressure is to be seen, not in the creation of a rite, but in the early gathering of highly sacramental associations about the rite which already existed. (2)

(1) Hislop: Our Heritage in Public Worship - p.76.
On this see also relevant passages in MacDonald,
Dix, et al.

(2) On this see especially MacDonald and Dix, op.cit.

Three further factors influencing the development among the Gentiles must be noted. The first has already been referred to above. (1) The experience of atonement through the death of Christ upon the Cross bulked more largely among the Gentile converts than among the Jews, and this element in experience was expressed in emphasizing among the Gentile churches the "memorial" aspect of the Supper. More will be said of this later. But when it is considered along with the related fact that most Gentiles were ignorant of the content of Judaism generally, including the apocalyptic ideas which were associated with the Supper in Palestinian circles, it is readily seen that the rite quite naturally assumed a somewhat different significance in the wider Gentile world. Secondly, it was to be expected that, since cultural backgrounds varied widely throughout the Roman world, and since converts to the new faith were not bound by an acknowledged allegiance to Judaism, there was a great freedom and variety in the creation of forms of worship in different parts of the world. Gentiles were on the whole much less exclusive and more eclectic in their attitude ~~to the~~

(1) p. 8

to the introduction of new materials into the rite than were former Jews, a fact which did not by any means always tend to keep the worship free from corruption. Thirdly, it would be interesting if it were pertinent to this thesis, to develop at some length the subject of the influence of Roman domestic architecture both upon the structure of the first Christian church-buildings, and the ceremonial of the worship which was carried on in them. All that can be said here is that when the use of the synagogues was denied to them the assemblies commonly turned to the houses of wealthy and interested laymen where the worship was offered. A study of a diagram such as that reproduced by Dix (1) suggests at once why certain acts were performed as they were, and why church buildings took the form which can still be seen in the ruins such as that at Jerash or elsewhere through^{out} the Roman Empire.

About the year 150 A.D. Justin Martyr described to Antoninus Pius in an "Apology" a Christian Sunday service. MacDonald (2) translates this account as follows:

"On the day of the Sun, all who live in towns or in the country gather to one place, and the memoirs

(1) See Appendix p. 105

(2) Christian Worship in the Primitive Church. pp. 66 & 67.

of the Apostles and the writings of the Prophets are read as long as time permits. Then when the reader has ceased, the President speaks, admonishing and exhorting to the imitation of these excellent things. Then all rise together and prayers are offered. At length, as we have already described, prayer being ended, bread and wine and water are brought, and the President offers prayers and thanksgivings to the best of his ability, and the people assent by saying 'Amen'; and the distribution is made to each one of his share of the elements which have been blessed, and to those who are not present it is sent by the ministry of the deacons."

Here is the earliest and most complete description of what had come to be the Sunday service, (perhaps the only formal Sunday service) of the Christian Church. It consists of two parts, the first being a Word of God service comprising the appropriated worship of the synagogues, and the second being the supper rite, a continuation of a custom which there is reason to think was frequently observed by Jesus and His disciples, and which they carried out for the last time together in the upper room on "the night in which he was betrayed." The next step in our task will be to give reasons for the conclusion that the Lord's Supper is a continuation of the series of common meals of which the Last Supper was the climax, to trace the process by which it passed into the Church's use, a process in which it came to be joined with the Word of God service, and to examine some of the content of the rite as it must have been practised early in the second century A.D.

III. The Supper Rite of the Primitive Church

In the story told in the Gospel according to Luke, Chapter 24, verses 13-35, of the two followers of Jesus who, on the first day of the week following His crucifixion, went to Emmaus, it is recorded (vv.30-31) that, when they sat down to supper "he took bread, and blessed, and brake, and gave to them. And their eyes were opened, and they knew him". Returning to Jerusalem they gave an account of the event, and (v.35) how he was "known of them in breaking of bread."

Now, suggested in this narrative, whatever criticism may have to say concerning its source or development under the influence of experience later in time, if it be at all a reminiscence of an actual occurrence, there are certain implications of very great significance. It is evident from the account that these two were not of the Twelve for they returned to Jerusalem and "found the eleven gathered together." (1) They had not been present in the Upper Room. It cannot be assumed that they knew anything as yet about what had happened there. But the simple act of blessing and breaking bread acted so strongly upon

(1) Luke xxiv:33.

the minds of these two that they were made aware of Him as in some sense a living Presence. Why? The only possible assumption is that they had been with Jesus upon previous occasions when He did what the person presiding at any formal meal partaken by devout Jews would do, namely, He said a thanksgiving over bread at the beginning of the repast, then broke it and gave a morsel to each of the company.

There is here at least a strong suggestion that it was the habit of Jesus to share such formal meals with His disciples and not with the Twelve only, and that He had made the simple rite of blessing and breaking so vividly impressive that it could become a source of recollection of Him.

In discussing the incident known as the Feeding of the Five Thousand (Mark vi:30-44) Dr. Bosworth writes as follows: (1)

"What Jesus now proposed was that they should eat together as brothers in the presence of God a meal of solemn penitence and reconciliation. He, as their host, had them arrange themselves in orderly ranks befitting a solemn religious occasion. He prayed in the presence of them all and after the stillness of the prayer the thousands of the poor and heavily burdened, the shepherdless flocks, ate together before God a simple poor man's meal that was prophetic

(1) Bosworth: The Life and Teaching of Jesus pp.200,201.

of the Messianic banquet to which all looked forward in their dreams of the coming Kingdom. It made the Kingdom of Heaven seem at hand.

"The religious significance of this meal was felt by all the early Christians. Long afterward, when the Fourth Gospel was written, it seemed to the author to have been the true paschal feast, presided over by the true Messianic leader of the people. (John vi: 4, 4-15) More than this it seemed to him to have been the true institution of the Lord's Supper"

It is significant that these words were published before the researches of Oesterley and others had focussed the attention of scholars on the existence in Jesus' time of the practice of the Chabûrah supper and, perhaps, the rite of Kiddûsh. There is now convincing evidence that it was a custom common among pious Jews in those days to gather for formal meals, which assumed a religious character. Groups of friends having an interest in religion which they shared with one another, came together in more or less definitely constituted societies, a principal feature of whose activities was the joining, usually weekly, in the partaking of a meal. A full account of this will be found in Gregory Dix's profound and invaluable study, "The Shape of the Liturgy," pp.50 ff. These "Chabûroth" (Chaber - a friend) were, to quote from Dix -

"little private groups or informal societies of friends banded together for purposes of special devotion and charity, existing within the ordinary Jewish congregations, much like the original 'Methodist' societies within the Church of England before the breach with the authorities developed."

This being so, it is natural that Jesus and His disciples would in Jewish eyes have formed just such a chabûrah, marked by a more than ordinarily close friendship, and by the exceptionally independent attitude of Jesus to the Law and the religious authorities. A chabûrah met ordinarily on the eve of the Sabbath or of a holy-day for a supper. Later on the rite of Kiddûsh developed, a formal blessing of the Sabbath and certain feasts. But since it is not certain that the Kiddûsh had taken form in His lifetime, or that Jesus observed it, the term is not used in this study. However, a certain ritual was commonly followed at these chabûrah meals, and its content is substantially known to us (1).

The bearing of this upon the much discussed subject of the Last Supper is at once obvious when the form and content of the rite accompanying a chabûrah meal is considered. For centuries it had been the unquestioned dictum of the Church that the Last Supper was a celebration of the Passover, and that during it Jesus instituted the Eucharist. Only during the past century have the results of critical activity caused scholars to question this opinion seriously. It is not unfair to say that, until recently, majority op-

(1) See Appendix B p. 106

inion would hold that, acknowledging all the difficulties, since the Last Supper could not have been anything else about which we have certain knowledge, it must have been the Passover meal. It is now much more nearly accurate to hold that the difficulties in the way of thinking that the Lord's Supper was a celebration of the Passover being so very great, it must have been something else. The correspondence with the ritual of a chabûrah supper is so very marked that the suggestion is irresistible that this is in ~~fact~~ ^{fact} what the Lord's Supper was, - a Chabûrah supper celebrated with a particular intention on the eve of Passover.

Within the limits of this essay it is not possible to enter into detailed discussion of the questions of New Testament criticism involved. In summary the position is somewhat as follows:

1. Scholars are now more inclined to accept the chronology of the Fourth Gospel, which would fix the Last Supper on the day preceding the Passover meal. Oesterly(1) makes the interesting suggestion that since the Sheaf of the Firstfruits was offered on the morning of Nisan 16, the second day of the Passover, Paul's reference in I Corinthians xv:20 to Christ as "the firstfruits of them that

(1) op.cit. p.183

are asleep" might indicate that the Apostle would have accepted John's chronology as opposed to that which the Synoptists confusedly attempt to fix.

2. If the Supper had been a Passover meal, a whole series of events must have taken place on a Feast day which were in direct contravention of the Law, and which would have involved the Jewish authorities in an inconsistency of which there is no sufficient reason to suppose they were capable. They were prosecuting Jesus in the interests of maintaining the Law.

3. The word *ἄρτος* is used regularly for bread, instead of the word *ἄζυμα* which would have denoted unleavened bread.

4. No flesh of lamb or bitter sauce, primary elements in the Passover ritual are even suggested as present.

5. The Passover was always a family festival. The Chaburah supper was partaken of by a group of male friends.
(1)

6. It was a rule that, having partaken of the Passover none of those present should leave the house before morning. Jesus and His companions did so leave, as did a great many others who were probably more concerned about

(1) See Maxwell: Outline of Christian Worship -p.6.

the details of the ritual than He was.

7. The Passover was celebrated annually: the Chab-
ûrah supper was held weekly. The primitive Church ob-
served its rite at least weekly. It would not have done
so had it been continuing the Passover. Discussing the
"breaking of bread" referred to in Acts ii:42, 46; xx:7,
Dr. Bosworth writes:

"If this daily or weekly 'breaking of bread' was the
'Lord's Supper' then the 'Lord's Supper' was not, in
the minds of the early Jerusalem Christians, closely
identified with the annual Passover supper; otherwise
it would have been celebrated but once a year." (1)

8. There is nothing to indicate that Saint Paul
regarded the Last Supper as the actual Passover meal, and
the Lord's Supper as a Christian Passover. He finds the
Old Testament type of the Christian observance in the dis-
tribution of the manna, not in the Passover. (2).

Considering the weight of all these factors to-
gether one feels obliged to agree with Otto, who voices
the opinion of most scholars who have recently discussed
this subject:

"The entire assumption that Christ's last meal was
a Passover meal and is understood to be of that
category must be abandoned." (3)

(1) Bosworth: Op.cit. p.362.

(2) On this see ^{Mc}Gregor: Eucharistic Origins -p.157.

(3) Otto: Kingdom of God and Son of Man - p.278.

From this point of view, then, let us look briefly at the New Testament records of the Last Supper. There are, of course, four,- St. Paul's (I Corinthians ^{x'}xi: 23-25); Mark xiv: 18-25; Matthew xxvi: 20-30; and Luke xxii: 14-38. In Mark's and Matthew's accounts the announcement of the betrayal precedes the breaking of the bread, which in a chabûrah meal was quite possible, since, while the bread-ritual was considered to be the beginning of the meal proper, certain dishes might be partaken of before this. St. Luke has the announcement of betrayal follow the meal together with the dispute over precedence, the appointment to the kingdom, the warning to Peter, and the intimation of His imminent end. This is, for various reasons, not a convincing arrangement of material, but the arrangement does not affect the conclusion to be reached as to the nature of the Supper. (1).

It should be observed that as the records stand that of St. Paul is probably first in time, and for this reason might be thought to have particular value. That he had conversations with some of the Apostles who were present at the Supper is certain, and it is now generally conceded that his words, "I have received of the Lord," ~~are~~

(1) Note: The Fourth Gospel contains no detailed account of the supper-rites, but read with an assumption that this was a chabûrah meal, a great deal in Chapters 13-16 acquires fuller significance.

are intended to indicate that he is recounting an authentic tradition rather than that he has had a special revelation.(1) Matthew is dependent upon Mark, and in their present form, both are later than Corinthians, although this is not to rule out the possibility that Mark may have had before him a written source of greater antiquity. As will be seen, this really does not affect the conclusion of the matter.

St. Paul and Mark (to include Matthew with Mark for convenience) are in general agreement, with the one exception that St. Paul adds the words after both bread and cup, "This do in remembrance of me." Since it is generally agreed that the same words recorded by Luke are there as a result of an attempt to harmonize his account with that of St. Paul, it follows that St. Paul is the only New Testament authority for these words. Discussion of questions arising out of their inclusion by him may be left until later.

It is probably true, as one writer (2) has pointed out, that it is in the long run impossible to attain

(1) On this see MacDonald-Op.Cit.p.144; MacGregor - Eucharistic Origins - p 70; Moffat - Commentary-I Corin. xi; 23.

(2) Hislop: Our Heritage in Public Worship - p.71

complete certainty as between the various forms of words used in these accounts. The disciples did not understand Jesus' meaning that last night, and what happened afterwards would not make for greater accuracy in their recollection of His exact words.

"It is perilous to speak of this high subject as though we were drawing up the minutes of a meeting." (1)

By the time the Evangelists wrote the supper-rite had become established in the Gentile churches in the Pauline form, and they could take a great deal for granted. The Fourth Evangelist does not think it necessary to give any account at all, which may mean no more than that he considered it unnecessary to waste space on a subject which belonged with the Church's most certain knowledge.

Far more serious than any variations in the Pauline-Mark-Matthew accounts is the assertion in Luke that a cup preceded the breaking of the bread, and this requires some consideration. Of the text, most scholars (e.g. Manson, in the Moffat Commentary, The Gospel of Luke, p.242) assert that vv. 19 and 20, Chapter xxii, are an emendation, omitted by the most primitive versions. Originally, then, Luke described a supper with a cup-bread sequence. It has been suggested that emendation arose from the desire to bring this account into harmony with St.

Pauls. This, however, has the obvious weakness that if

so, why was not all reference to the first cup eliminated? Here again, the hypothesis that the Supper was a chabûrah - meal offers some assistance. This meal did not always take the same form. The first cup, or the second, or both, could be omitted. The breaking of bread, with its blessing, was the fixed element as the studies of Oesterly and others make clear. The evidence goes to show that there were many occasions upon which the Supper was celebrated in the primitive Church with a cup preceding the bread and there probably were others in which no cup ritual at all occurred. (1). This seems to have been true especially in Palestine. Now some scholars are inclined to connect Mark with the Church in Rome, while the sources of Luke are thought to have associations with Caesarea. Paul wrote for the Gentiles, and there is evidence that his form of the rite became general in the Church of the Gentiles while there was still considerable variation in Palestine. The Didache and other documents seem to indicate this. Luke's source may have known a cup-bread ritual, or even a cup-bread-cup ritual, for it may well be that the alteration in the text to leave it as it now stands was done deliberately and with the knowledge that a chabûrah meal on the eve of Passover would take that form. Two considerations would influence St. Paul (who probably knew as much

(1) See below -pp. 48 ff. for a fuller discussion of these variations.

about these rituals as anybody in the Church):

1. The first cup had really no permanent significance which could not be absorbed by the remainder of the rite. Jesus did not drink it, and remarked over it only that He would not do so again until the Kingdom of God should have come. These eschatological references could not have conveyed a great deal of meaning to the minds of Gentile converts, and St. Paul carried over the essential and valuable significance in his comment, "For as often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup ye do show the Lord's death till He come." Further, this first cup, coming before the breaking of the bread, was not considered to be a part of the meal proper in any case, and there could be no valid objection to omitting it. We come therefore to the conclusion that Luke's account of what happened at the Last Supper may well be more accurate as to these details than the others, but that, especially among the Gentiles to whom the Supper came to mean much more fully a memorial of Christ's death, the first cup represented nothing of permanent value.

2. A second consideration may have influenced St. Paul (1). He wrote his account as a model for the obser-

(1) Note: It has been suggested by some that in I Corin. x:16 St. Paul's mind may be going back to a form of the rite he had himself observed in which the first cup was used.

vance of the supper rite in the churches because he wished to correct certain abuses, and provide a corrective to pressures from paganism to which Gentiles were always subject. While there is little very definite evidence concerning the practices of Mystery religions at this time, when they do emerge from obscurity later it is clear that a cup ritual occupied a prominent place in their rites. Further, there was a custom at pagan banquets of pouring a libation of wine at the commencement of the meal. All of which may have been in the Apostle's mind when he limited his form of the rite to one cup, following the bread. Which is, of course, if one is to signify the body and the other the blood of the Lord, the natural order.

Before going on to discuss the question as to whether St. Paul was reporting an actual saying of Jesus when he recorded the twice quoted injunction, "Do this, etc.," it may be useful to recount briefly what may well have been the course of events at the Last Supper.

Toward evening on the day before that on which the Passover lambs were killed, (that is, on Thursday Nisan 13) Jesus came with the Twelve to the Upper Room where preparations were to be made for the Feast on the next evening. It is as certain as anything can be from the records that He knew that a plan was on foot to hand

Him over to the authorities. His remark in Luke xxii:15-16 bears the interpretation that He will not eat of this Passover as easily as it yields the meaning that He will. With His mind occupied by problems that might be created for His followers by His approaching death, He reclined with them to continue the table-fellowship which had come to mean so much to them. It being the eve of Passover, the meal would naturally assume the emphasis of a Thanksgiving for the Feast. He did not drink of the cup passed during the partaking of the "relishes" preceding the meal proper, saying that He would no more drink "of the fruit of the vine" until He should share with them the fellowship of the Kingdom of God. When the time came for the meal to begin bread was given Him, and as He broke it He said the well-remembered blessing over it, then gave a piece to each of the company saying as He did so words whose significance probably escaped them at the time (a fact which cannot be considered remarkable, since the Church has been unable in 1900 years to agree as to what is their exact interpretation!) "This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me." The meal would then proceed in its normal manner, each new kind of food being blessed by Him as it was brought to the table (1).

THE SUPPER

It might last a very long time. The major purpose of

(1) See Dix:Op.Cit. pp.50-54 for a fuller account of the form of a chaburāh meal.

of these suppers was fellowship in talk, not eating. Nobody except Judas had another engagement to take him away from the company. As to the subjects of conversation, it is quite possible that contained in the relevant chapters of the Fourth Gospel is a more accurate record than has been supposed. And it may be, as Dix (1) has suggested, that when the time came for an attendant to bring the basin and towel for the washing of the hands, He performed the task described in John xiii: 1-12, at once a rebuke and an example to these men who had been so concerned about the place of precedence which was to be theirs in the Kingdom. Afterwards, taking the cup (the only one over which the blessing was said by the host in the name of all) He fulfilled with them the ritual of Thanksgiving, probably with special reference on this occasion to the approaching Feast. As it passed from one to another (2) He made a remark similar to that which followed the breaking of bread,- "This cup is the new covenant in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me." (It is not difficult to perceive how, when the meal proper had ceased to intervene between bread and cup rituals, these words should become by assimilation, "This is my blood

(1) Op. Cit. p.56

(2) They would all be standing.

of the new Covenant," with the added theological elaboration). And if He did say, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood," it is even less justifiable to attempt to press into His words a high sacramental significance such as is involved in doctrines of transubstantiation. All these literalizations of His words in the interests of sacramental doctrine are later evolutions of minds which moved in areas of thought unfamiliar to Him.

But can we imagine that He would say such words at all? To begin with, the reference of the bread and cup to His body and the covenant in His blood, have been held to be contrary to His way of thinking and impossible in a Jew. This kind of argument, however, presupposes the rigidly literalistic interpretation which just is not there. St. Paul was a Jew, and there is no evidence that his conversion resulted in the abandonment of all his Jewish knowledge and mental associations. It is he who records these words. One feels that Luther probably was much nearer understanding the mind of Paul than many modern critics. To the Apostle faith was the one essential, and one could only be fed by the spirit of God through the presence of faith in his soul. Material things had little to do with this. Otto is probably stating the truth when he writes (1):

(1) Religious Essays: p.48.

"Nowhere in the Synoptic records nor in St. Paul's words is there the least hint that Christ intended to give Himself, realistically or spiritually, as a 'food' for us."

If one reads carefully the forms of blessing which were probably used by Jesus and the Twelve at the Last Supper (1) and considers with imaginative sympathy (a quality which too often disappears when one adopts the methods of Biblical criticism) the associations of mind and emotion in which the company met, he cannot but conclude that the reported words of Jesus would arise in His mind naturally on such an occasion. The "Old Covenant" had been "sealed in our flesh," the New was to be sealed in His broken body. As they entered more fully into understanding and acceptance of His principle of sacrifice He made His followers sharers with Him in this New Covenant with its benefits.

Most recent writers on this subject (e.g. MacDonald, Macgregor et al.) have felt obliged to conclude that, while the injunction to repeat the rite is true in intention to the mind of Jesus, He probably did not utter the words attributed to Him. Fuller consideration of the evidence makes this conclusion appear unnecessary. It arises in part from a too great literalism in limiting the reference of His words, and in part from failure to appreciate adequately the significance of the theory accepted

(1) See Appendix B pp. 106-7

by these same writers that the Last Supper was a chabûrah meal.

To what did Jesus refer when He said, "Do this in remembrance of me"? Are we to think that the reference was limited simply to the act of breaking the bread or passing the cup? Surely the words apply rather to the whole ceremony of which they are part, of which they point the significance, and in which alone they have any meaning at all. When He said them what He meant was, as the disciples very well knew, to refer to the practice of eating a meal together, a meal which was never partaken without breaking bread and which often included sharing a cup of wine. It was this, the chabûrah supper practice, which they were to "do."

Dom Dix has pointed out (1) that the command is to be understood, not so much as an injunction to repeat a rite--which, to pious Jews, was of obligation anyway--but to do it for a particular purpose, "with special intention." A familiar custom is being given new meaning.

Surely He knew that they would continue the custom whether or not He asked them to do so. What ground is there for believing that He assumed that if He should be taken away from them their fellowship would be completely

(1) Op.Cit. p. 57.

broken up? If we are correct in placing this Supper in relation to many other suppers, the partaking of which had become a regularly repeated and precious experience, is there any likelihood that He would feel that, whatever might happen to Him that fellowship would come to an abrupt end? (1) Could He have so mean an estimate of the work that God had done through Him? It was unnecessary to ask that the Supper be repeated. What He did do, and do deliberately and for sufficient reason, was give to the familiar experience new connotations. It had been a fellowship of Master and disciples. Whatever the shape of the future it could continue to be that. His death would not be the end of everything, either for Him or for them. If it were the purpose of God to give the Kingdom through His death, then they would continue their fellowship in the Messianic banquet. If not, He would be present at their meals at least in their minds. They needed regular and powerful confirmation of their faith and renewal of their perception of His way of love; how better could

- (1) On this subject of future developments Our Lord's mind was probably far less definite than many critics imagine. It was part of His humanity that He should share our common inability to push aside the curtain and perceive the shape of the future. Whether or not he is reporting actual words of the Lord, the writer of Acts clearly perceives the temper of His mind when he records the saying, "It is not for you to know times and seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power"--Acts 1:7.

He ensure that they should have it? This one thing they would be certain to do; therefore let them do it as a means of recalling Him to their minds and hearts. To assert this is to claim no more than that Jesus fulfilled the obligation resting upon any leader of men, to provide for the continuity of His work and the fidelity of His followers in the event of His death.

We might be certain that He would relate the Supper closely to the mission which He had been fulfilling. His words make it a foretaste of the fellowship which was to be in the perfected Kingdom. The present relation of Master and disciple, which goes back through a series of previous experiences, looks forward also to more to come. It was this thought which took the place of greatest prominence in the practice of the Church in Palestine. But it was not the only thought, and anticipation of the Kingdom's advent was not the only reason, that moved to the celebration of the Agapé. The Emmaus story suggests that repetition of the rite of breaking bread had just the effect Jesus had desired that it should have, and because it proved a means of "recalling" Him, we hear of "the breaking of bread" as part of the earliest activity of the Church.⁽¹⁾ But the whole Supper had become by His action, enforced by His death, a memorial; and it was natural that the different emphasis in the spiritual experience of the

(1) Acts ii: 42.

of the Gentile members of the Church, of which notice has been taken above, should lead in that section of the Church to the thought, reflected in St. Paul's account, of the Supper as a means of "showing forth the Lord's death till He come."

In the Book of Acts, in the early Second Century Didache, and in the Aprocryphal Acts of John and of Thomas, there is evidence of a form of Lord's Supper which came to be known as the Agapé, and which differs from that described by St. Paul. It consists essentially in the breaking of bread, sometimes with no reference to the sharing of a cup of wine. Its existence has caused liturgical scholars a great deal of concern, and in their efforts to explain it or explain it away they have been driven to adopt ingenious argumentative devices. Their difficulties have been due to the traditional assumption that Jesus intended that the supper rites should always include both elements of bread and wine, whereas, if the theory stated in this paper be correct, what He did suggest was that the Supper, which He knew would sometimes not include the sharing of a cup of wine, should be continued in whatever form might be appropriate for a chabûrah supper on the particular occasion, but with the intention of "recalling" Him. Recognition of this would dispose of the difficulty ~~felt by~~

felt ~~by~~ many to require the surrender of the thought that Jesus did request continuance of the rite, namely the supposition that for twenty years His followers did not so continue it. If our theory be correct they did continue it, and they did so exactly as He desired. They continued the practice of the chabûrah supper, varying it from time to time as had always been customary. Is there a reflection of St. Paul's knowledge of this in the words which he includes in his account of the cup ritual, "as oft as ye drink it"? There is no parallel in the bread ritual, and while too much weight should not be given to the argument, it is possible that we have here an indication that both Jesus and St. Paul knew that while the bread would always be broken, there would be many occasions on which the cup would not be shared.

It is in documents associated with Palestine, where the Jewish influence was strongest, that indications remain of variable practice in celebrating the Lord's Supper. Acts may intend the phrase "the breaking of bread" to designate the rite in whatever form was used. In the Didache (1) a cup-bread ritual is indicated. Of this document Macgregor holds that it probably was in circulation in Palestine at the end of the First Century

(1) See Appendix C - pp. 108

A.D., in ^{some} "backwater of religious progress," and may thus preserve an earlier, pre-Pauline usage. (1). In the Apocryphal Acts of John ⁽³⁾ and Acts of Thomas ⁽⁴⁾ a rite in bread only is described, although in the latter there is reference to both "body and blood." These rites survived in the 3rd Century Liturgy of Hippolytus, in the description of the Agape, and in the Egyptian Liturgy of Serapion in the middle of the Fourth Century (2). In the West and among Gentile churches the rite described by St. Paul early came into general use, and again the reason is not difficult to perceive. The rites associated with Palestine usually contain no allusion to the death of Jesus, and have a direct eschatological reference. Here we come again upon a difference in spiritual experience. To the Gentiles the eschatological reference was secondary; their interest in the atonement effected through the Cross was primary. This difference finds expression in the history of the development of their central rite. This emphasis upon the Atonement is also central in St. Paul's thinking. To those who would lay upon the broad shoulders of the Apostle to the Gentiles the charge that the Lord's Supper is his invention we may concede this much, in praise of his acute spiritual insight rather than in blame, that

(1) Macgregor: Eucharistic Origins- p.148.

(2) See MacDonald, Dix, et al. Op.cit.

(3) 106-110 (4) 121, 133 See JAMES: Apocryphal New Testament.

it was probably due to his influence that the form of the rite became fixed as it did in the Gentile, and, ultimately, in the whole Catholic Church. The centuries of Christian corporate devotion attest the adequacy of his choice. For he not only placed the emphasis where it accorded with the testimony of continually reproduced experience, but he so firmly and clearly rooted the rite in a historic process and occasion that it was able to withstand the corruptive pressures of pagan myths, and vindicate itself as the most precious single possession of the worshipping Church.

IV. A Word of God Service
and the Supper Rite

It has been shown above (p.27) that in the earliest extant account of a Christian service of worship what is described is a Word of God service followed by a Supper Rite. At what date these two came to be joined we do not know, but probably it was at different times in different places. The juncture might be expected to occur first in the churches of the Gentiles, where the separation of Church and Synagogue began early in the missionary activity of St. Paul. In Palestine, where converts were mainly Jews, expulsion from the Synagogue seems not to have come so soon. It may well be that there were localities in which Jewish Christians continued for a long time to worship in the Synagogue. But a break was inevitable, and when it did come Jewish influence was everywhere sufficiently powerful to ensure that the essential content of Synagogue worship was secured to the Christian Church.

This worship consisted in the reading of selected portions of what we now call the Old Testament, exposition of the reading by some qualified teacher, the singing of a psalm or psalms, and certain benedictions and other prayers (1). Justin's account reveals that these

(1) See Oesterley: Op.Cit.

are precisely the elements which compose the first part of the Christian service, with certain differences arising from the special interests of the new Faith. He does not mention singing, but from other sources, notably St. Paul's letters, we have evidence that when Christians gathered for worship they sang, and at first they would have only the psalms to sing. Christian hymns were soon added, as we shall see. It may be, too, that there was some common act of confession of their faith, although this, too, is uncertain. And gradually, if slowly and with hesitation proper in a matter so important, the Church placed alongside the Law and the Prophets as matter suitable for her reading and study the "memoirs of the Apostles," - the Epistles and Gospels.

At the same time the pressure of circumstances was bring^{ing} about a radical modification in the supper rite. It had begun, and at least in Palestine, continued for a long time as a meal, in which the rituals of the bread and the cup (when the cup was used) had their place, giving meaning to the whole. But in the Gentile world especially there was constant danger of corruption by contagion from pagan practice, and everywhere in larger centres there must have arisen the very practical difficulty of serving a meal after the congregations had grown to sizeable pro-

portions. The result was that the meal-proper dropped out, in many places continuing as a separate and distinguishable rite, held always in the evening, an Agape. At some time after the separation the Eucharist came to be celebrated in the morning. It is impossible to be precise in these matters, as evidence is too slender. Dix (op.cit. pp.100 ff.) suggests that the separation may have occurred at Rome, as Clement describes a liturgical gathering which does not take place at a supper table. As a large and important Gentile Church Rome is as likely a place as any to be the scene of this development. As to the date, all that can be said is that St. Paul's account assumes that a meal is partaken between the bread and the cup rituals, while by 115 A.D. Ignatius knows the Eucharist as a rite and the Agape as a different rite. Sometime between 54 A.D. and 115 A.D., then, the meal was separated from the Eucharist.

This development brought with it certain alterations in the Eucharistic form. There had been separate blessings over bread and cup, and in many places the blessing over the bread had become quite long and involved. When the meal ceased to intervene, the necessity for two prayers was not felt, and the first blessing was assimilated to the second, said over bread and cup together. This prayer, the Great Prayer of the Liturgy, underwent during

a rich and varied evolution which it is impossible even to suggest here. But the main outline of the whole service was now fixed, and it is a tribute to its sufficiency and truth that it has remained the major service of the Church to this day.

(1)

Dr. Maxwell/has suggested that toward the end of the first century Christian worship had developed into something like the following:

(References mean that these elements are indicated in the New Testament as constituents of worship).

1. That which grew out of the Synagogue:

Scripture Lessons (ITim.iv:13; I Thess.v:27;
Col. iv:16)

Sermon as exposition (I Corin.xiv:26; Acts xx:7)

Common Prayers (Acts ii:42; I Tim.ii: 1-2)

Amens said by people (I Corin.xiv:16)

Psalms and Hymns (I Corin.xiv:26; Eph.v:19; Col.iii:16)

Confession of Faith (I Corin.xv:1-4; I Tim.vi:12)

(Perhaps) Almsgiving(I Corin.xvi:1-2;II Corin.ix:10-13;
Rom.xv:26)

2. The Celebration of the Lord's Supper:

Form as in one or other of Narratives.

Prayer of Consecration would include Thanksgiving, Remembrance of the Lord's Death and Resurrection, with ~~some~~ Anticipation of His Coming, Intercessions, and perhaps the Lord's Prayer.

(Luke xxii:19; I Corin.xi: 23,25,26; I Corin. xiv:16; John xvii: I Tim.ii:1,2; Matt.vi:9-13; Luke xi:2-4).

There were probably singings in this part also, and the Kiss of Peace. (Rom.xvi:16; I Corin.xvi:20;
I Thess.v:26; I Peter v:14).

There was no Thanksgiving at the end of the primitive rite. It would be most likely that the service would end with a hymn.

In considering either the form or content of primitive worship one must always remember that all of it was regarded as Spirit controlled. Only the Spirit could enable a man to pray or to praise God, and conversely one must offer prayer and praise as the Spirit might direct. This made for great freedom in worship, and produced a warmth, ardour, freshness and spontaneity which continued at least as long as the first period of enthusiasm. It must be emphasized that this does not mean that worship was formless, or that anyone considered himself at liberty to innovate as he pleased. The general outlines came from synagogue and upper room. Within these was room for great and varied expressiveness. Furthermore, a mind under profound stimulation does not necessarily invent fresh forms of expression; rather it tends to recall familiar phrases, albeit infilling them with new meanings. It is no accident that early Christian prayers are strongly scriptural in language.

Until the second half of the second century it appears to have been agreed that the Scriptures of the Law and the Prophets possessed peculiar authority, but

gradually the Christian writings took place alongside them, and we may well imagine that those containing the words of Jesus were regarded with special veneration. There seems to have been no fixed order or length of lessons. Justin says that the reading continued as long as time would permit. Formation of a lectionary does not fall within our period. But from the beginning certain passages must have appeared especially appropriate on certain occasions or anniversaries. Once the Christian Year developed, selection of passages to conform to the thought of its seasons followed naturally.

We have no example of the preaching which accompanied the worship. It probably differed in type from the missionary preaching of which we do have some specimens in Acts. Sermons which formed part of the eucharistic worship appear to have been primarily expositions of the scripture passages read. No doubt they included a good deal of the allegorical method which was so common, and which, with all its faults, did enable the Church to preserve for us the scriptures of the Old Testament. Oratory was a highly developed art in the ancient world, and as soon as the Church drew to herself men skilled in public utterance a definite preaching style would develop. But the evidence for it lies beyond our period. One is justified in concluding, however, that these primitive preachers were not

likely to ignore the prime function of the Christian evangelist as stated by Simpson (1):

"The evangelistic office of the Church is to present Christ unto men, vestitum evangelio, clothed in His Gospel."

In appropriating the Psalms to her own use the Church acquired an instrument of inestimable value both for her common worship and for the private devotions of her members. They were later to provide a major portion of the material for the eight daily Offices of the monastic communities. From the beginning they were used in common worship, and their exalted strains of praise must have had great influence in maintaining the quality of the whole service. One cannot do better here than quote from the Catholic authority on liturgies, Abbot Cabrol (2):

"These divine canticles, breathing forth such varying accents of prayer and praise, of humble supplication, true contrition, fervent petition, and of every emotion of the human soul in the worship of God, have been repeated by each generation of Christians, and in them the Saints have found the truest expression of their aspirations

"Study, then, this book. Are you sad? It weeps with you. Are you full of joy? You will find in it songs of rejoicing. Are you sinking under the burden of your sins? It will lend you words to express your sorrow and repentance. If your soul is in doubt, if you have felt the emptiness of all human things, it will hold up to your gaze the hope of heaven. If you have lost father, mother, children, the friend of

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- (1) Ideas in Corporate Worship - p.124.
(2) Liturgical Prayer - pp.17-18.

your youth or the companion of your manhood, you will find in its pages accents befitting your grief. If your soul, in the presence of God, feels like barren ground, from which no prayer can spring, open this book; it will teach you how to pray."

So abundant is the treasure the Jew gave the Christian in the Psalter!

But this was not the only contribution to enter the worship from Jewish sources. There are traces of several Canticles from the Old Testament, e.g. Exodus xv: Deuteronomy xxxii; I Kings ii; Habakuk iii; Isaiah xxxviii; and probably others. From the synagogue worship came the Amens said by the people, the Hallelujah, the Pax Tecum, a form of greeting long in use among the Jews, with its response, "Et cum spiritu tuo." The Kedûshah, which we know as the Sanctus, probably goes back to usage that is pre-Christian. As will be seen below, primitive Christian prayers owed much to the language of the Old Testament. Even the Lord's Prayer contains close parallels with elements in Synagogue services.

Of the use of the Lord's Prayer in the early services there is little evidence. The Didache refers to it, and some consider this as sufficient indication that it was in constant public use, and had been so from the beginning. It is difficult to believe that it could have been otherwise, unless we are to accept a view that it is

a creation of the Church rather than in substance at least from the lips of Jesus. In Apostolic writing there are allusions to it which are much more intelligible if we assume that the Prayer was in constant use. Such usage of a form of prayer would be in harmony with a custom with which worshippers in the synagogues would be familiar (1).

In the days before churches were built the ceremonial, the actions, accompanying the worship would be reduced to a minimum. Worshipping in private houses there was little room for ceremonial. We know that the President occupied the central place at the table, with his assistants on either side of him. Men and women were separated as in the Synagogue. Any adult male might take part in the readings or lead in prayer. Women were expected to keep silent. Men were bareheaded; women veiled. Prayers were ordinarily said standing. While the worship included a full meal, the bread was received either sitting or reclining, while the "cup of blessing" was received by the participants standing. When this stage had been reached the President sat at the end of the room facing the people with the table between him and them. It was well on in her history before the Church transformed the table ~~into~~

(1) On this see Oesterley, op.cit.

into an altar, and the minister officiated with his back to the congregation (1).

Concerning the permanent meanings which the primitive Church found in its rite we do not need to be in doubt. Christians in all places and in all ages have shown singular unanimity in this in spite of their differences in emphasis. The rite early came to be called the Eucharist, the Thanksgiving, from the fact that through it praise and thanks were given to God for His works of creation and redemption. It is the Lord's Supper, a title which gathered up in itself several connotations. It reminded believers of the historic origins of the feast, and rooted their worship in an historic fact. It pointed their thoughts forward to the feast that should be in the Kingdom of God. Their crucified and risen Lord was their Host at His Table, and at it they had real fellowship with Him. It was not long before the conviction developed that He fed them there, and as we shall see, rigid ideas of the sacramental significance of the rite appeared. As a successor to a meal partaken in common by a group of friends, the consciousness of community found expression in it, a community not only of the members of the local congregation, but of all believers, and of the Church on earth with the Church in heaven. It suggested the truth

(1) For these details, and others, see MacDonald, op.cit.

of sacrifice. There was in the beginning no suggestion of a sacrifice of bread and wine, or of a renewal of the sacrifice of Christ. But the idea of the offering of praise and prayer, and of the rededication of self to the service of God was implicit in the service from the beginning. Most primitive Christians could have made their own the words of Luther (1):

"... when I receive this Sacrament, I offer sacrifice -that is to say, I accomplish the will and service of God, I confess Him, and I give Him thanks. This is not a sacrifice for sin, but a sacrifice of thanksgiving and praise."

Primitive worship was "objective" in character. Attention was fixed upon God and His work of Creation and Redemption; upon the Lord Jesus Christ, the Saviour, and the facts of His Death and Resurrection; and upon the sanctifying activity of the Spirit. Early Christians appear to have avoided the tendency to concentrate upon the inward look. It is perhaps significant of much that there is little evidence of confession of sins in the early worship. That this element was present to some extent can scarcely be doubted, for the Church now had made its own the penitential Psalms, with their unsurpassed expression of the consciousness of the need of God's pardoning grace. But even here the confession was a corporate act, and the emphasis was upon the wonder of Atonement rather than upon the details of the individual's failure. ~~The~~

(1) Quoted in Underhill: Worship- p.58. -----

The dominant notes of the worship were thanksgiving and adoring praise. This was the Church's offering to her Redeemer, her chief and supreme privilege, a conception expressed in many places in the New Testament and especially in the book of Revelation.

Primitive Christians had a sense of "something done" in worship which has been preserved by the Catholic branches of the Church but is largely absent from Protestantism. It is not unfair to say that the average Protestant regards participation in a worship service in the main as an opportunity to free his soul from such burden of sin as he may admit, to gain enlightenment of mind in matters pertaining to the fulfilment of God's will by him, and to fortify himself for renewed effort in righteousness. The emphasis throughout at least tends to be upon the individual, his need and his work. Many have a feeling that their praying could be done as well in solitude, and one may even find Protestant ministers who contend that public prayer is essentially an unnatural act. Such ideas had no place in primitive worship. The individual brought his needs, his aspirations, his duties, to God in his worship, but there was no thought that he did so by himself, or that what happened to him was merely a process of inner psychological readjustment. (He would not have thought so even if he had known the modern jargon.) He

had a sense of something being done which ^{it was} beyond his own power to do. His worship was an offering, and grace was to him a reality in itself, a substantial gift of God appropriated through communion. The enlightenment which came through the reading and exposition of the Word was not an end in itself but a means to communion. When he had to leave something out of his worship he left out the sermon!

It was the Christian community which made the offering of worship and the individual participated as a member of the community. This notion was carried over from the practice of the chabûroth. When the President blessed and broke bread at a chabûrah supper he constituted the chabûrah, and after that no one might join in the fellowship, and no one might leave it until the dismissal. It was a corporate action. Dix has well expressed this aspect of the matter (1):

".... the apostolic and primitive church regarded the eucharist as primarily an action, something 'done,' not something 'said,' it had a clear and unhesitating grasp of the fact that this action was corporate, the united joint action of the whole church and not of the celebrant only. The prayer which the celebrant 'said' was not the predominant thing in the rite. It took its place alongside the 'special liturgies' of each of the other 'orders,' as one essential in the corporate worshipful act of the whole church, even as the most important essential, but not to the exclusion of the essential character of the others."

(1) Op.cit. p.15.

It must be remembered always that primitive worship was the worship of believers, not compromised by the presence of the unconverted and the requirements of what moderns might term the function of "evangelism." That found its fulfilment elsewhere.

There must always be a vital relation between the worship and the doctrinal conceptions of the worshippers. Worship influences doctrinal development and doctrinal development must find expression in the form of worship if the latter is to retain the character of reality and adequacy. In the period under review here the most apparent effect of worship upon doctrine was in the influence upon Christological thought. The use of the title "Lord" as applied to Jesus, which Morgan has called "the greatest landmark in the history of early Christianity," (1) probably began to be general as a result of the worship experience, in which the power of the Spirit, connected in the Christian mind with Jesus, was perceived as active. In the mind of the Jewish convert the shadowy figure of the Messiah came to be identified with the Lord Jesus Christ. Among the Gentiles the "Lord" never was just another among the "lords many." It was the continuous reminder of historical events and the repeated experience of the power of the risen Christ in their Eucharists that enabled Jew

(1) Quoted by MacDonald: p.204.

and Gentile alike to maintain His place of supremacy in their hearts, and therefore in their minds.

It has been noted above (p.12) that the worship assemblies were the centres from which all activities of the early churches were directed. The distribution of gifts to the poor came to follow the Eucharist. MacDonald (op.cit. pp.15-16) thus summarizes Harnack's account of the procedure:

"Each Lord's day, or once a month, or when one felt moved, gifts in money or in kind were brought to the worship and handed over to the President. He laid them on the Lord's Table, thereby consecrating them to God. The president decided who was to receive, and how much; thought he might be advised by the deacons, who would be more familiar with the needs of each case. Then the deacons distributed the gifts to such recipients as were present, and, after the worship was finished, conveyed the remainder to the absent at their homes. From the first the President appears to have had the supreme disposal of the gifts, the deacons acting as his executives. The powers and responsibilities involved were great; hence the need that such men should be no lovers of money."

Under such conditions it would be difficult for people to think of prayer and philanthropy as being separated things. Prayer and works took their proper places side by side in the worship of God.

But nothing in this world remains uncorrupted for very long, and it was inevitable that the corroding influences of ancient society should affect the Eucharist. Otto has suggested (1) that the idea of consecration, of that which makes a thing "Kadosh" (holy) is contained in

(1) Kingdom of God and Son of Man - p.283.

the Kiddûsh rites as they are now known to us, and whether or not the Last Supper was a Kiddûsh for the Passover, it is probable that the chabûrah meal on such an occasion included this element. It passed by inheritance into the Church's Eucharist. For while the principal pressures which resulted in the growth of the sacramental idea in the Church appear to have come from paganism, the idea itself was not foreign to Judaism (1). It was natural under the circumstances that when the period of enthusiasm was passed the perception of the Divine Presence should harden into a semi-magical sacramental conception. Already at the end of our period we find Ignatius, who was almost a contemporary of the "John" of the Fourth Gospel writing of -

"breaking one bread, which is the medicine of immortality, and the antidote that we should not die, but live for ever in Jesus Christ." (2)

It is not a long way from this ~~to~~ conceptions of "transubstantiation" and a materialized "Real Presence" which had no place either in the mind of Jesus or the experience of the primitive Church.

The earliest complete Eucharistic prayer known to us is that from the Liturgy of Hippolytus (3), in use

(1) See Otto, op.cit..

(2) Quoted by Macgregor - op.cit.pp.210-11.

(3) See Appendix E. p.110

in Rome early in the Third Century, but probably completed by the year 200 A.D., and probably containing many elements in use long before. From this time on the number of Liturgies still extant increases. The Church in each succeeding generation brought to her central rite her richest treasures of devotion and liturgical skill, until the simple Eucharist of the first Century was elaborated almost beyond recognition. The skeleton remained, but it was overlaid with a plethora of decorative material which well-nigh obscured its structure. In the West the Mass magnified the idea of sacrifice, a repetition of that offered on Calvary, and in course of time the action came to be performed by the priest with or without the assistance of a congregation. In the East the element of mystery assumed pre-eminence, and the Divine Liturgy repeats within the screened sanctuary the drama of redemption.

These processes of accretion continued almost without interruption until the Reformation, when a fresh eruption of the Spirit of God in the soul of man brought a desire for the restoration of the Eucharist to something like its primitive simplicity and sincerity. Reformers did not agree in their doctrines of the Sacrament, but they were one from the beginning in their insistence upon its centrality in the Church's worship. The first Mass in German was said in Strasbourg in 1524, and underwent a

series of simplifying revisions until John Calvin heard it in 1539 and used it as a model for his form of service for French exiles living there. Calvin never altered his opinion that the Eucharist should be celebrated every Sunday morning, and since he could not obtain this desired end, he saw to it that the Sunday Morning Service was in content and intention a Eucharist lacking only the material elements.

The process by which the simplified Mass became the Sunday Morning Service of the Scottish Church and of English Puritans has been traced by Dr. Maxwell (1) and it is not possible even to indicate it here. In England Archbishop Cranmer formed the Orders for Morning and Evening Prayers from material in the monastic Offices, but he did so apparently with no thought that these would ever be regarded as substitutes for the major act of worship of Sunday morning, the Holy Communion. It was the misunderstanding, the ill-informed zeal, the lack both of liturgical skill and perception of devotional values (2) which led later generations in the Reformed Churches to sacrifice the inheritance of Sunday Morning Worship originally claimed for them by the first Reformers. Pro-

- (1) John Knox's Genevan Service Book - pp.23 ff.
- (2) Together with a disproportionate emphasis upon the illuminative factor--the Word and its exposition.

testant worship has been immeasurably impoverished as a result.

V. Prayer in the Common Worship
of the Primitive Church

Attention has been drawn above (p. 52) to the firm conviction of the primitive Church that all true prayer is offered through the power of the Spirit. (For indications of this see Romans viii: 26; ~~Eph.~~ vi: 18; I Corin. xiv: 15.) This being the case, prayer normally followed the reading and preaching of the Word, as is asserted in Justin Martyr's description already quoted. The Church of the First Century anticipated Luther's opinion(1)-

"When the people are not first instructed by God, it is impossible to pray. Indeed, no one can pray aright by himself unless he preaches to himself beforehand. Through such preaching to oneself, the heart is moved and awakened to prayer. This is what happens in our churches

It followed naturally that the prayers should be highly Scriptural in language, thought and spirit. We find in them a confidence, gratitude, adoration and sense of dependence very similar to that expressed in the literature upon which they were unconsciously modelled.

But from the beginning there were differences. Christians tended to be more inclusive in their sympathies than Jews. They were many peoples made one in Christ. Their fellowship embraced all the earth and the faithful in heaven. Their consciousness of filial relationship with God was stronger and more individual than that of the de-

(1) Quoted by MacDonald, Op.cit. p.89.

vout Jew. Wherefore "the God of our Fathers" becomes "Our Father," and the "Lord God Almighty" Who has created all spirits and all flesh and given His Son to gather together His elect in all the earth.

The most striking change is, however, that early in the course of the development Christian prayer comes to be addressed to God through Christ. Heiler (1) considers that St. Paul's influence was decisive in bringing about this change. He alone of the Apostles had not known Christ intimately in the flesh, and he could not have had in his mind so vivid a picture of the human form of Jesus. It was the Christ in glory Who had appeared to him, and there could not be for him the same difficulty in placing the Name of Christ in such close association with that of God as there must have been for those other devout Jews reared in a tradition of intense monotheism. He can offer prayer without hesitation to "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ" in the "name of the Lord Jesus." This was as far as the development went in liturgical prayer, although there is New Testament evidence that Christ was addressed directly in prayer (2). This is, indeed, only the natural development of the address to God through Him,

(1) Prayer, pp. 54 ff.

(2) e.g. II Corin. xii:8,9; Hebrews i:6;
Revelation v:12.

and is connected with the cognate fact of the composition of hymns in praise of Christ.

There is no example of a complete church prayer in the New Testament, but there are two documents which come to us from about the end of the First Century which contain prayers, the one definitely for use in public worship. These are the Didache, which is generally thought to have been in circulation from 90 to 110 A.D., and the First Epistle of Clement to the Corinthians to which the date 96 A.D. is given. (For texts of the prayers see Appendices C and D, pp. 108, 9)

The prayers in the Didache may with justice be described as Christianized forms of those prescribed for the chaburah supper. The blessing over the cup has become a reference to Messianic expectations, and that over the bread a thanksgiving for "new life and knowledge" through Jesus. The thanksgiving at the end is not only for food and drink, but for "spiritual food and drink and eternal life" through Jesus, and there follows intercession for the Church which was to become a constant element in the prayers at Eucharistic celebrations. The language throughout matches that of the New Testament. That the authors were capable of rising to high levels of imaginative in-

sight and devotional expression is witnessed by such forms as:

"As this broken bread was scattered upon the mountains, but was brought together and became one, so let Thy Church be gathered together from the ends of the earth into Thy Kingdom."

"Remember, Lord, Thy Church, to deliver it from all evil and to make it perfect in Thy love, and gather it together in its holiness from the four winds to Thy Kingdom....."

The prayer which comes at the end of Clement's Epistle is not represented as a public prayer, but the language of public prayer usually corresponds generally to that of private prayer, and there is some reason to think that Clement may here be recalling petitions used in the common worship of his own church. Its dependence upon Jewish literature is obvious, and in every passage it breathes a spirit akin to the great devotional passages in the Old Testament (1).

Of both these prayers it may be said that they dwell principally upon God, pondering His attributes as known to the redeemed, recalling with gratitude His creative and merciful provision for His people, overflowing in adoring praise. It is remarkable how little attention is given to the needs and desires of those who are praying. But the needy, the oppressed and the feeble are not forgotten, and those who bear rule in the earth. It is well

(1) See MacDonald, *op.cit.* pp. 90-93.

to note here that primitive Christians prayed for those in authority over them, even those who caused them to be persecuted. They asked for them "health, peace and stability," as Clement does, but they do not seem ever to have imagined that the hearts of the rulers could be won to Christ, for there is no evidence of petition for their conversion. Perhaps the sure insight of the Church perceived that a Christian could not exercise authority of the character which those in high places were required to wield. This prayer at least seems to carry out the injunction of the Apostle that supplications be made "For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty." (I Tim.ii:2).

The prayer of Clement ends with a doxology, as does that in the Didache. It seems that this had been from the beginning the custom, and in this Christians followed an example set in the synagogues. Heiler (p.333) lists the following forms of doxology found in the New Testament which may have been so used, -- Phil.iv:20; I Tim. i: 17; Rom. xvi: 27; and Eph. iii;21. In addition to providing a worthy and exalted conclusion to the prayers, the use of these forms exercised a beneficent effect upon the whole, as they tended to lift all the language and thought to their own high level.

Common prayer in the primitive Church was always and thoroughly a corporate act. It was the offering of the Christian community as such. This does not mean that the interests and aspirations of the individual were neglected. The case was very much the opposite. But they were remembered because, since all were members of the One Body, that which was the concern of any member was the concern of all. The offering of the prayer was an act of the worship assembly. It was not so much that the leader was thought to be speaking on their behalf, as that they were thought to be speaking through him. The constant and frequent use of "Amen" and other ejaculatory expressions common in the worship were a vocal evidence of this truth.

Now if a group is to worship together continually with full participation by every member, it is essential that each should know at least in general what is to happen. Those who lead in the worship must remember that they do so in a representative capacity. Over-individualism in the prayers does not promote group solidarity in devotion. St Paul realized the danger that too much freedom exercised in the name of the Spirit might lower the tone of the worship and impair its adequacy. Further, there is a language peculiar to prayer, and not all are fluent in that language.

In the days of maximum enthusiasm the Church con-

sisted of relatively small groups sharing together a new and startlingly vivid experience. As has been shown, the quality of this experience was matched by the type of worship offered. This was limited in the main to the supper-rites. But as the enthusiasm waned, as the groups increased in size and their membership grew more complex, the necessity for some elementary rule or form of worship would become increasingly apparent. This would be especially so in places where the synagogues were closed to Christians, and the fuller services had to be provided.

From the beginning there had been fixed forms,-- the Lord's Prayer, the Psalms, canticles and responses appropriated from Jewish usage. It was not long before the prayers themselves began to assume set forms, of which there came to be very many. It is possible that larger churches developed their own liturgies, each having a general resemblance to the others, and each possessing peculiarities of its own. This meant that a traveller might go from one church to another, finding himself "at home" and able to participate as a member of the worshipping body, yet to some extent stimulated by differences in the rites of particular churches.

Heiler (1) has written of this growth of form

in prayer,-

"Prayer is at first a spontaneous emotional discharge, a free outpouring of the heart. In the course of its development it becomes a fixed formula which people recite without feeling or mood of devotion, untouched both in heart and mind "

That there is some truth in this statement there can be no question, but it is an overstatement and it ignores those necessities of common prayer which require at least some element of "fixed formula." Where ritual prayer has become "without feeling or mood of devotion" it is because the form has ceased to be adequate as an instrument through which experience may be expressed, or because the religious reality has died out of the souls of the worshippers. There is no evidence that the primitive church ever reached this stage. It had gone a considerable distance in the development of forms of prayer by the end of our period, but its worship retained freshness and vitality which indicated that the form was thoroughly the servant of the spirit.

It has been pointed out above (1) that the first complete Eucharistic prayer now known is that found in the Liturgy of Hippolytus (2). Any detailed consideration of it lies outside the limits of this study. However, it has

(1) p. 67

(2) See Appendix E, p. 110

interest for us in that it very probably contains elements long in use, and that it represents those principles of common prayer which appear to have been accepted as sound by the Church throughout the process of the development of its worship. Here is no unwholesome subjectivity, but a constant fixing of the gaze of the soul upon God, and upon His work in Christ. It is entirely Christian in its content, the distinctively Jewish phrases of thanksgiving having disappeared. Attention is centred upon the work, passion, death and resurrection of the Son of God. It is entirely a prayer of thanksgiving, a Eucharistic prayer. It is interesting to note that it contains, with the exception of the Sanctus, those elements which have been constant in the content of the Church's great Eucharistic prayers. Beginning with the short Litany which is still in use, it passes through Thanksgiving at remembrance of Christ's redeeming work (Anamnesis), the Words of Institution, Oblation, a short Epiclesis and Intercession, to the concluding Doxology.

The remains of primitive hymnody in the New Testament are few and scattered, and at first thought this may appear strange. Great revivals of religion bring as part of their expression outbursts of song, and it would be extraordinary if the joy of early Christians had not overflowed in the creation of Christian hymns. But it

must be remembered that the Church in those days had no interest in preserving records for historical purposes. Gospels and Epistles were written and preserved as practical necessities for worship and for use in the missionary enterprise. Songs are easily remembered; the necessity to write them down in permanent form would not appear. Later, in the Third Century, as a result of the use of hymns by the Gnostics to popularize their heresies, the Church forbade the singing of any songs save those found in Scripture, and all others were suppressed. Doubtless a good deal of treasure perished in the process.

St. Paul, in writing to the Corinthians (1) and again more strongly to the Colossians (2) urges the value of hymns as a means to edification. Since few specifically Christian hymns were in existence, this can be taken to indicate that the composition of them would meet with his approval. It has been suggested (3) that the stream of early Christian song was much more considerable in volume than is indicated by the slender remains, and this inference appears justified. That Christians did sing is evident, and that the custom was widespread is attested among others by Pliny, who, in his letter to Trajan (4)

(1) I Corin xiv:26

(2) Col~~i~~ iii:16.

(3) MacDonald, Op.cit. pp.114 ff.

(4) Quoted by MacDonald, Op.cit. p.114.

says that in his time (112 A.D.) it was the custom at Christian gatherings to "sing to Christ as to a divinity."

Now praise is a form of prayer, and it is significant that while, as has been noted, prayer was always addressed to God through Christ, in their songs Christians did not hesitate to address Christ directly. Consideration of the passages listed below as possible remains of hymnody in the New Testament indicates to what marked degree the subject of them is Christ, and how far Christian thought about Him has moved. Some of them are really affirmations of faith, perhaps nascent forms of creedal statements. But they most closely resemble both praise and prayer. This leads one to reflect that the purpose of a creedal statement used in worship is not theological, but devotional. Creeds ought to be sung, rather than said, and primitive Christians sang them. They understood them to be of the nature of poetry, attempts to say in words that which cannot be uttered.

The earliest examples of song in the New Testament are the nativity hymns in the Gospel of St. Luke: i: 46-55; i: 68-79; and ii: 29-32, and they are more Jewish than Christian in thought and tone. In the book of Revelation are many suggestions of forms of praise, the more notably Christian being i: 4-7; v: 9-14; xii: 10-12; xix: 1 f.; xix: 5-8. Many others found in the same

book may be borrowed from the Greek-speaking Synagogue. St. Paul's letters contain several passages which may be identified as hymns: Eph. v:14; Rom. xiii: 11,12; I Tim. iii: 16; II Tim. ii: 11-13; and Phil. ii: 6-11.

It remains to reiterate concerning prayer that in this period it was the belief that something happens when Christians pray together. The conception was much more vivid and vital than it is amongst most Christians to-day. There was no limiting idea that it might be a useful form of mental exercise, a variety of psychological stimulation and cleansing heightened by atmosphere and the influence of the group. Corporate Christian prayer was understood to be a reality suitable to constitute an offering precious to God, and God was thought of as Himself at work in the praying assembly. The outflowing of the Spirit was accepted as evidence of this. The question so often asked by moderns, "Does God Answer Prayer?" would have been unintelligible to members of the primitive worship assemblies. How could one have such a doubt as it implies? They saw God at work in His Spirit moving amongst them to achieve marvellous things.

VI. Common Worship in the
United Church of Canada

The United Church of Canada stands in the Reformed Tradition and claims as its right by inheritance the treasury of the worship of the Church Catholic. Sensitive to the particular needs and aspirations of the contemporary world, it is not unaware that the disposition of mind of this generation has been profoundly affected by the methods and habits of thought developed in the modern scientific enterprise. How can the United Church, then, provide on the one hand for the fulfilment of its primary responsibility to afford sufficient instruments through which its members may offer their worship to God, and, on the other, for the discharge of its duty to declare the Gospel to those who have not received it? This is the problem which faces every minister who takes with entire seriousness both his priestly and his prophetic functions.

That it is an unsolved problem is attested by an appalling abundance of evidence. It is admitted that there has been a decline in church attendance among those who are at least nominally members. Vast numbers of people, including many of the keenest minds and most socially sensitive consciences, not only are seldom if ever seen in any church, but feel no need for that which the services of the church offer.

Now it should be recognized that there is little justification in the New Testament for the expectation that in any generation the Church will be more than an elect minority. Our age suffers from a general decline in specific religious faith, and no reform in worship will in itself restore this spiritual loss. The discussion which follows is admittedly no sufficient treatment of the problem stated, and by itself must be found inadequate. But it is held to be a real and important element without which the attainment of fuller efficiency in the prosecution of the Church's divinely appointed mission is unlikely.

Dean Sperry has written (1) --

"So long as the Church bids men to the worship of God and provides a simple and credible vehicle for worship it need not question its place, mission, and influence in the world. If it loses faith in the art of worship, is thoughtless in the ordering of worship, and careless in the conduct of worship, it need not look to its avocations to save it. It is dead at its heart, and no chafing of the extremities, producing what Carlyle called 'quaint galvanic sprawlings' will bring back the life that has left it."

It has been stated above (p. 68) that the leaders of the Reformation designed to continue in purified form the Eucharistic service which had been for centuries the principal Sunday worship of the Church. Their successors, preoccupied with other concerns, and fearful of any relapse into the superstitions and abuses from which

(1) Reality in Worship. p. 168. -----

the Reformation had effected deliverance, allowed a progressive alteration both in the form and content of this service until it not only bore slight resemblance to its original, and was greatly impoverished in content, but expressed a different emphasis and fulfilled a different intention. Worship came to centre about the Word as the declaration of God's will and the announcement of His eternal purpose (1). In Scotland at one period the development proceeded so far that the service included little more than a sermon and prayer (2). The factor of illumination had become all important. God's Word was to be grasped by the mind, and the response of the will in the direction of obedience was all that man had to do. The inadequacy of this limited conception was soon realized, and through the centuries since there has been movement in the direction of more complete and balanced worship. But in the main the sermon has been regarded, and still is so regarded, as the most important element in the service. Reformed worship has rescued men from the position of spectators at mass to make them hearers of sermons. What goes before is often not much more than "opening exercises," a "programme" put together by the minister, or often by the minister and the choir leader without careful planning or forethought.

(1) Hislop: Op.cit. p.180.

(2) Maxwell: John Knox's Genevan Service Book.

Methodism arrived at much the same result by a different process. Having begun as a powerful evangelical impulse, it remained for some time within the fellowship of the Church of England, and the necessity of providing services of worship was not apparent. The Societies met chiefly for the reading of the Word, for prayer and the sharing of experience, or to hear a preacher. When it became necessary to suggest forms of worship, Wesley turned to the familiar Prayer Book of the Communion in which he was a priest. Writing to "Our Societies in America" he commended to them his Morning Service with the words,-

"I believe there is no Liturgy in the World, either in ancient or modern language, which breathes more of a solid, scriptural, rational piety than the Common Prayer of the Church of England. And though the main of it was compiled considerably more than two hundred years ago, yet is the language of it not only pure, but strong and elegant in the highest degree." (1)

But it remains true that Archbishop Cranmer, himself the author of Morning and Evening Prayer, did not regard these services as substitutes for the principal service of the day, the Eucharist. And one wonders whether Mr. Wesley would find the language of the contemporary heirs of the Methodist tradition, who suffer from the mistaken notion that the use of liturgical forms is inconsistent with spiritual freedom, "pure, strong and elegant in the highest degree."

(1). - quoted in The Discipline of the Methodist Church -
(U.S.A.) p. 549.

In addition to this prejudice against the use of forms of prayer much Protestant worship has been influenced by a lack of appreciation of what ought to be its scope and content, and by a confused notion of its purpose. To consider the latter first, it has been remarked above that the sermon has been regarded as the most significant element. This has not been only, or perhaps chiefly, because of the desire to "edify" the faithful, but because it has been thought that every service must have a decided "evangelical" purpose. That is to say it is assumed that the preaching must be directed toward the conviction of those who either are not believers or have become weak in the Faith. Primitive worship was believers' worship, and it has been the constant thought of the Catholic Church to provide in her main service of the day for the Faithful. This understanding must be recovered. Sperry (1) contends that the influence of worship services on non-Christians has been exaggerated; that the major influence is probably that of individual Christians upon non-Christians. He would say therefore what the primitive Christians assumed, that the main concern of common worship in addition to offering praise to God, must be to equip Christians to give their witness. To this one would like to add the

(1) Op.Cit. p.188.

theory of Dr. Sclater (1) that there are two types of service, services of worship and services of mission. The regular Sunday service is of the former type, and its scope and content should be determined by a clear appreciation of this fact.

Need for this readjustment of understanding and emphasis is recognized on all sides. Brilioth, a Scandinavian, writes (2):

"... when the claims of the pulpit to undisputed primacy, together with a rationalized theology, have all but completed the work of disintegration, another voice arises and claims to be heard; the irrepressible need of the soul of man for devotion, adoration, and mystery, awakens again the sense of reverence for ancient forms, and demands outward beauty and spiritual depth in the Church's worship On every side we see men groping after a fresh expression of the sense of mystery in worship; and this movement necessarily finds its centre in the Christian mystery par excellence, the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper."

A Scot, R.S.Simpson (3) puts the matter this way:

"... corporate worship is the response of the whole manhood of the individual, and of the society in which the individual has his place, in thought and will and imagination and that mysterious movement of being which is the depth of personality, to the wonderful revelation of God to our world in Jesus Christ."

Evelyn Underhill (4) defines worship as,-

"the total adoring response of man to the One Eternal God self-revealed in time."

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- (1) The Public Worship of God - p.23.
 - (2) Eucharistic Faith and Practice -p.1.
 - (3) Op.Cit. p.17.
 - (4) Worship - p.61.

Another Scot, (1) having pointed out that worship has come to be regarded as a means to an end rather than as an end in itself, writes,-

"Worship is an authentic and absolute attitude of the soul to God. Nothing can take its place. Worship in its essential nature is not simply a means of bringing nearer the Kingdom of God, or creating the brotherhood of man" (it is) "an attitude to the Whole which involves the total personality of man and all his faculties are concerned in this experience" (2)

This conception of common worship as an act of the Christian community involving all the faculties of its members must govern every wise attempt to restore the fallen citadel of devotion. It must appear strange to an observer that those ministers who have been alive to the realities of the situation should have turned for assistance to the psychologist (3), to the artist and musician,

(1) D.N.Hislop, op.cit. pp.21 ff.

(2) On pp.45 ff. this writer points out that modern psychology makes much of what is called the "subconscious," in which is included what is repressed, what is not attended to at the time, and what has not yet emerged. In worship, ideally, as communion becomes complete the tension of attention is relaxed and the subconscious freed for cleansing and the process known as "sublimation."

(3) --who may write eloquently of worship without being being himself a Christian. Meland, for instance, regards all historic forms of worship as inadequate, because they presuppose the doctrine of the atonement, which was he thinks destined for inevitable dissolution. It is not, however, the business of the Church to provide worship for Unitarians, Humanists and other unbelievers, but to bring them to full Christian experience so that they may then join in the worship offered by the Christian community.

seeking to "dress up" the service with pageantry or bits of music (often beautiful in themselves but meaningless in the whole movement), and should have ignored the historian of Christianity. He would have pointed them to the Eucharistic rite of the Church which has persisted through centuries of changing circumstances, with the obvious suggestion that through recovery of its use, or through forms of service based upon it, there lies a surer path to the attainment of the desired end. A service of worship has been described as "an artistic recapitulation of Christian experience"(1). The persistence of the supper-rite through the centuries is sufficient testimony that it has fulfilled this requirement.

The development in many modern congregations of various types of Christian Education constitutes, as Dean Sperry (2) has pointed out, an additional reason for the return to the primitive emphasis in Protestant Sunday worship. Increasingly the function of enlightenment has been assumed by agencies both within and without the congregation, leaving the purpose of the main service of worship in many places in doubt. Witness the difficulty confessed by many preachers in finding themes and material for two sermons a Sunday! If these agencies for Christian ~~education~~ ^{education} are efficient, the educational office of the pul-

(1) Sperry, op.cit. p.175.

(2) op.cit. pp.185 ff.

pit should be less, not more, urgent, and if they are not efficient, there are serious reasons for doubt whether the pulpit can take their place.

" ... unless the tradition of worship is to die out of Protestantism altogether, being replaced by lectures, forums, and the like, the Sunday morning and evening services of the Protestant churches must be prepared to meet the need and discharge the offices of the 'Mass of the Faithful'." (1)

The general conclusion seems to be correct, although the observation should be made that in most places it is probably not necessary that both morning and evening services on Sunday be modelled upon the Eucharist. One service might be of a more "popular" character, a service of witness, with "evangelism" as its primary object.

The authoritative statement of the position of the United Church of Canada in the matter of her worship is "The Book of Common Order" (2). It is not here suggested that the forms of service there set forth are to be regarded as the norms of public worship in the United Church. One could wish that it were so. But anyone who has opportunity to share in the worship of congregations of various types in different parts of the country is made painfully aware that ministers and congregations exercise to the full their legal right to order their common worship as they please. The result is a general ~~dis~~

(1) Sperry, op.cit. p.187.

(2) The Book of Common Order of the United Church of Canada - 1932.

disorder. It is all too clear that there is a deplorable lack of liturgical knowledge, training and skill among ministers. Whatever the cause, it is evident that at the present the Book of Common Worship is not fulfilling the function of a directive in determining the form and content of the worship of the great majority of congregations.

This book is intended to be used in conjunction with the Hymnary (1). In this latter volume are included not only a considerable selection from the hymnody of Christendom, but also from the metrical Psalms which had so large and beneficent a part in the worship of Reformation times. There is also a prose Psalter containing the most usable of the Psalms arranged to be read in unison, responsively or antiphonally, and pointed for chanting. The book is completed by the inclusion of a number of Canticles, Creeds, Confessions and Responses. It is necessary that the existence and contents of this book be remembered in considering the forms of worship contained in Common Order, ^{as} and it is the supplement of the latter, and its existence ^{is} was assumed when the Orders of Worship were constructed.

(1) The Hymnary of the United Church of Canada: 1930.

The Book of Common Order falls into two almost equal sections, the first containing -

1. Two Directories and four Orders for Public Worship, with a Directory for an Evening Service and a selection of Prayers to be used with these Services.
2. A Table of Lessons. This is arranged according to the Christian Year, with lessons from the Gospels and from other parts of the New Testament for each Sunday, and from the Old Testament for many Sundays, thus restoring the place of Prophecy, which has been lost in some lectionaries. For each Sunday there is a Collect. These are drawn in the main from the Book of Common Prayer of the Church of England.
3. Two Orders for the Celebration of the Lord's Supper, the first embodying the general structure and content of the historic Christian Eucharist with whose beginnings this paper has been concerned; the second designed to follow the sermon in an ordinary service, and including all essential elements of the Mass of the Faithful.

The second half of the Book contains Orders of Service for various occasions in the lives of individuals or groups, and for the orderly discharging of the functions of the Church with regard to the Ministry. This essay is concerned only with the Order for the Celebration of the Lord's Supper, and with the second of the two Directories for Public Worship and the two Orders based upon it.

The Order for the Celebration of the Lord's Supper consists of the two movements whose beginnings have been already traced, the Word of God Service and the Supper Rite. In the course of time the Church prefixed

to these a short act of worship consisting essentially of approach to God and confession of need, with some element of praise. In the Order now considered there is first a Psalm or Hymn (shewing forth the power, the goodness, and the grace of God), with an Invocation, a short Litany taken from the Liturgy of St. Chrystostom, and the Kyrie Eleison and Gloria in Excelsis (in English) to conclude this first movement. The Word of God Service begins with a short prayer for illumination, followed by the reading of a portion of the Old Testament or an Epistle or both. A Psalm, the so-called "Gradual Psalm," intervenes between this reading and the reading of a portion from a Gospel. Recitation of the Creed or the singing of a hymn may follow, after which the sermon brings this section of the service to a close.

The Supper Rite commences, as historically, with the collection and presentation of the offerings of the people and the preparation of the elements for communion. It is intended that this shall be accompanied by the singing of a hymn. Intercession for the Church, the Nation and for all men follows, with Commemoration of the Departed. The Invitation Confession, Prayer for Pardon and Comfortable words, with the Prayer of Humble Access, form a movement which may be replaced by the short Prayer of the Veil. The Great Prayer opens with the responses which

were noted as present in the Liturgy of Hippolytus. The Preface contains a short Thanksgiving for creation, as in the primitive and Eastern rites, with special prefaces appropriate to various Sundays. From the Sanctus the Prayer then moves on through Thanksgiving for Christ and His Work, the Words of Institution, Anamnesis, Epiclesis (from Divine Service, Scotland), Oblations (of the "sacrifice of praise" and of "ourselves") to the concluding Doxology, followed by the Lord's Prayer said in unison. The Breaking of Bread then takes place, accompanied by a narrative based largely on St. Paul's account of the Last Supper, the Pax is given and Minister and People receive Communion. The short post-Communion prayer of thanksgiving and for grace is a translation of prayers by John Calvin, and the prayer of intercession following is a shortened revision of the celebrant's last prayer in the Liturgy of St. Chrysostom. A Hymn of Praise is sung, and the Benediction brings the Rite to a close.

Of this Order several things should be said:

1. It is definitely a form of worship, and for those whose devotion to "freedom" makes it impossible to use "forms" of prayer, this Order has no attraction. It should either be used in the completeness of its outline or not at all. Many of its contents are variable, and it is not impossible that "free" prayers might be

used in place of some of those set down, although many ministers are incapable of sustaining the adequacy of thought and beauty of expression which mark this Order throughout. Some phrases may not ~~be~~ in harmony with our ways of thinking, and there is reserved to us the right always claimed by the Church to revise its instruments of prayer from generation to generation. But to tinker with this Order, to add something here or take something away there simply because of individual preference or caprice, to leave out or perform fumblingly or wrongly the action that must accompany it to make it meaningful, is to place oneself in the same category with the amateur who would deface by his daubing the work of a great artist, handed down from antiquity and jealously preserved. No question is here intended as to the "validity" of a sacramental service which does not follow this Order. It is a matter of good judgment, of propriety and of fidelity to the historically verified experience of the Church.

Concerning forms of prayer such as this, Evelyn Underhill has pointed out (1) that their value consists (a) in their "suggestive quality," the capacity to call forth in the worshipper that sense of the mysterious, the "numinous" which must find its place in all worship if the whole personality is to be engaged in it; and (b) in their

(1) Op.cit. pp.31 ff.

"span of reference," which renders them capable of providing media for religious expression for people of many degrees of development and of many and varying types.

"A religious ritual is an agreed pattern of ceremonial movements, sounds and formulas, creating a framework within which corporate religious action can take place." (1)

The primary justification for ritual is necessity. As has been pointed out above (2) if people are to worship together each must know what is going on. There must be some kind of form, and there must be agreed formulae in which all may join. Furthermore, it is not true that repetition of forms always results in the action becoming meaningless or devoid of feeling. Everyone with experience knows how deeply moving the hearing, saying or singing of familiar and well-loved forms of words may be if the setting and associations are suitable. In this case the setting should be a reverent representation of the greatest Event in history, and the associations the memories of all that one has known of the grace of God in Christ. It is better to say that here a form is not only justified, but that these ancient forms, coming down to us hallowed by centuries of Christian use alone are adequate to give expression to the deepest moods and highest

(1) Op.Cit. p. 32.

(2) p. 74

aspirations of the Christian soul in common worship.

2. This Order has historical connections with the principal streams of Christian common worship. A survey of its contents has revealed elements drawn from both Eastern and Western rites, from the Reformation, from the Anglican Common Prayer (the source of Methodism's forms of common worship), from Scotland, and beyond them all from the primitive Church and its New Testament.

3. This is an Order for the Celebration of a Sacrament. It is not just a beautiful memorial service for a dead Hero, as some so-called Communion services seem to be. It is not a variety of love-feast with little or no reference to the grace of God out-poured. It is a sacrament. Here material elements are present as media through which God in Christ gives Himself to the worshipper. Of this aspect of the matter Garvie has written (1):

"Even if we call these ordinances symbols, we do not necessarily reduce them to mere signs, for a symbol is effective only as it also conveys what it signifies; and we can at least admit that they (the Sacraments) were intended to convey and that in experience they have conveyed grace, even where the faith attached more to the efficacy of the sacrament than to the reality expressed; for the goodness of God is not limited by theological correctitude or ecclesiastical proprietyLest the word grace be misunderstood, as it has been, as a quasi-metaphysical entity which God communicates, and man receives through sacraments, it must be added that grace is nothing else or less than God Himself present, active, imparting Himself in His Spirit to forgive, renew, perfect and bless."

Simpson has truly remarked (1):

"The sacramental thing in the sacrament is not what we do, but what Christ does."

And we conclude this section with words from Underhill (2):

".....the whole liturgic life of Christendom is built on a double foundation: the Bible and the Eucharist. The uttered Word and the living Presence, the holy doctrine and the holy food, the message of salvation and the sacrifice of praise, are the gathering points of devotion wherever Christian worship retains and expresses its real character as a loving and grateful response of the creature to the self-revelation and self-giving of God..."

And further (3):

"So the individual worshipper who gives himself without reserve to the total movement of the Eucharist finds himself caught into, and made part of, a spiritual drama in which the deepest impulses and needs of his spiritual life are represented and satisfied."

4. The worship envisaged in this Order is the offering of a community. It is a corporate act. There is provision for vocal participation by the people, but beyond that the conception is that the people offer their prayers through the minister. It is a supper-rite, and the Christian family is gathered again about the Table of the Lord.

5. The Order gives place and proportion to the abiding emphases to be found in the Church's supper rites. Thanksgiving; Commemoration of historic events, of the Divine self-giving for sin; sacrifice, the offering of worship and of self; anticipation of the Kingdom and of the

(1) Op.Cit. p.32.

(2) Op.Cit. p.120.

(3) Underhill: Op.cit. pp.139 ff.

fulfilment of fellowship; and Communion, both with the living Lord and with the Redeemed on earth and in heaven; all these find place here.

6. Dean Sperry has stated (1) that the final test of religious services must be: "Have we here significant religious forms which are calculated to make us more aware of God and of our fellow men?" Anyone who has shared in worship reverently and intelligently conducted, even in humble surroundings, by a minister using this Order, will be convinced that it does successfully meet this test.

The second of the two Directories for Public Worship is based upon the Order considered above. It is not necessary to remark upon it in detail. Even superficial examination will reveal that in movement and intention it follows step by step the Lord's Supper. It is in effect a Eucharist from which the words and actions directly associated with the presence and distribution of bread and wine have been omitted. The "spiritual" elements are all there.

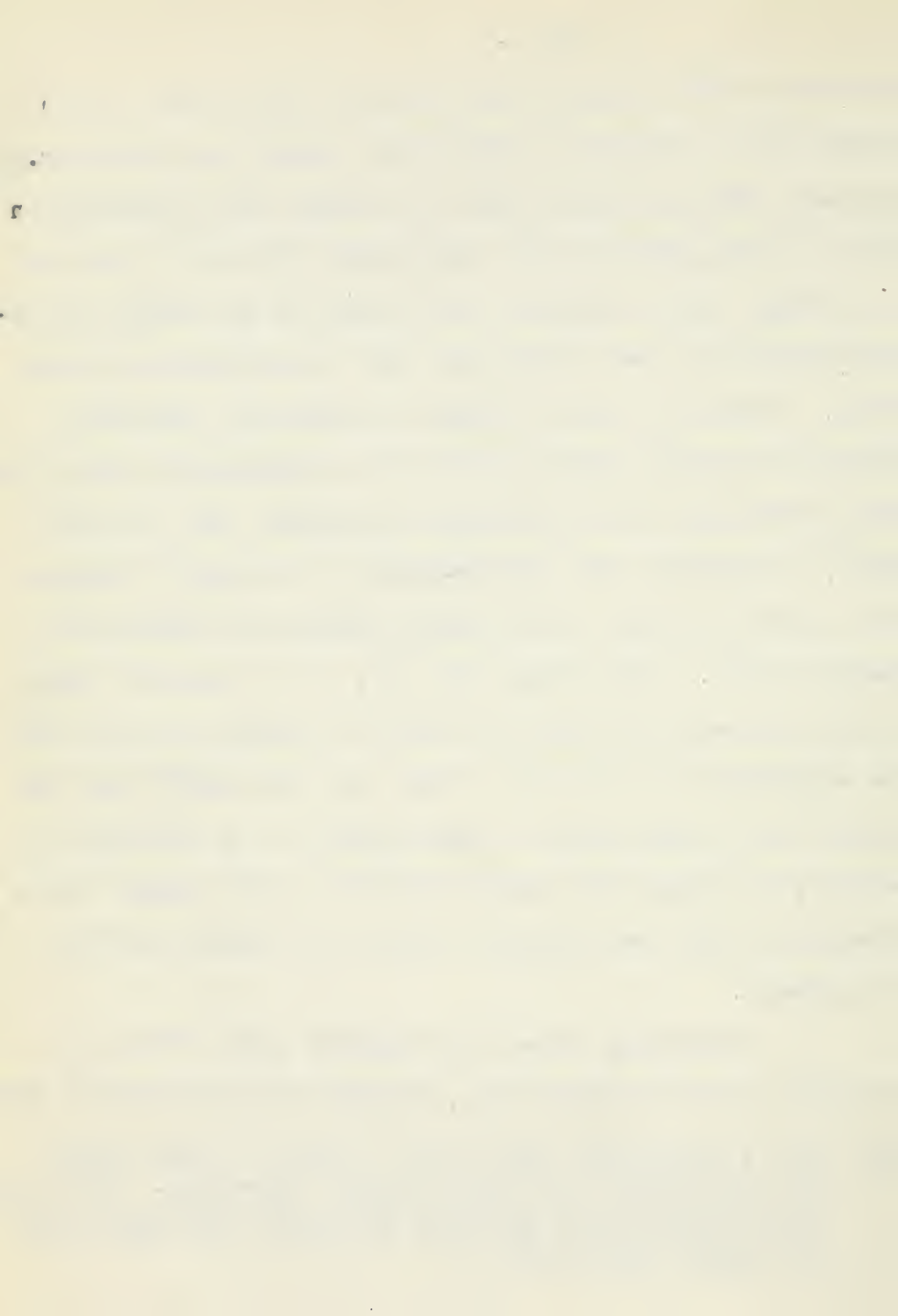
A service of this scope and content is the right of every Christian congregation at least once on Sunday. In the Reformed Churches Communion has become a congregational and occasional act, and there are important consi-

(1) Op.Cit. p. 238.

derations which suggest that distinct loss might be the result of an attempt to alter this custom too radically. In many cases it may be wise to provide for a celebration once a month, and in many communities it will be best so to arrange these occasions that folk who are unable to attend except in the evening may have opportunity to do so then. There is, too, a value in corporate communion shared by various groups within the congregation which has been overlooked in the Reformed Churches. But with all this, it remains that participation in the Lord's Supper will probably never in the United Church of Canada be a weekly event. Such being the case, it is essential that in the recovery of the lost values of common worship this be considered as the norm,- that once each Lord's Day His people have opportunity to participate in an offering of worship in scope and content modelled on the Supper rite, whether or not the material elements of bread and wine be present.

Preaching takes its rightful place within the movement of this worship (1), and were the suggestions here

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- (1) It is recognized that there is still a large place for missionary or "evangelistic" preaching. This will be found more effective, however, at services or meetings specifically designed to attract non-Christians or lapsed Christians.



adopted it might the more easily recover its character of exposition of the Word of God and a means of moving the hearers to make the offering of prayer. And, as Abbott Cabrol has written (1):

"To pray well is to live well, or at least to have a strong and earnest desire to live in accordance with our prayer."

To the enrichment of this worship the Church should bring every resource that art, music and architecture, as well as the modern technical abilities, can offer. Garvie (2) has pointed out that God has woven as the garment in which His presence is perceived a material universe of infinite variety, surpassing beauty, measureless abundance and vastness. He has given to men aesthetic sense to appreciate and aesthetic talent to reproduce beauty of shape and colour and sound. "May not beauty claim a place in religion with truth and goodness?" It does not appear that there is any good reason why it should not be so. If worship is the offering of all our best to God, then surely the offering of worship will be clothed in forms of the utmost beauty that can be devised. The shape and structure of the buildings in which worship takes place should at once express the nature of Christian faith and provide adequate and suitable settings for the

(1) Op.Cit. p.24.

(2) Op.Cit. p.17.

kind of worship that is to be offered in them. Since the United Church of Canada maintains the tradition that the Supper is the gathering of a community about a Table, the Table ought to occupy the central place in the building, and the rest be appropriately grouped around it. A Table placed against the end wall of the sanctuary is as much out of harmony with this conception as is one dwarfed into insignificance by the pulpit which towers above it.

Lest it should appear that in this last section there has been a divorce between worship and work, two aspects of the Christian offering which we saw to be inseparably associated in the life of the primitive Church, we close this essay with quotations from three masters of this subject representing different traditions within the one Church of Christ:

"If the Church does nothing else for the world other than to keep open a house, symbolic of the homeland of the human soul, where in season and out of season men reaffirm their faith in this universal fatherhood of God, it is doing the social order the greatest possible service, and no other service which it renders to society can compare in importance with this." (1)

"Worship, then, is the expression of the soul's secret, of the treasure of grace, of the presence of Christ in the heart, of the majesty of the Lord in the Church. But even as we say this we recognize that as age follows age, the demand for expression will become wider and costlier..... It is precisely the need of a wider expression which we must recog-

(1) Sperry. Op.cit. p.165.

nize in order to draw within the circle of sympathy those men who are now said to be good, but irreligious. Our worship fails to hold their sympathy, not because it is too rich and large, but because it is too small, too thin. We need to-day a ritual much more august than that which seemed for a time to satisfy while it expressed the inward treasure of the ages of faith".

(Here he goes on to state that all life and all its interests being part of God's worship must find a place in the ritual) -

"The surgeon who knows best that the work of healing is sacred, is the last, and this because his sacred work is so exacting, to neglect Holy Communion." (1)

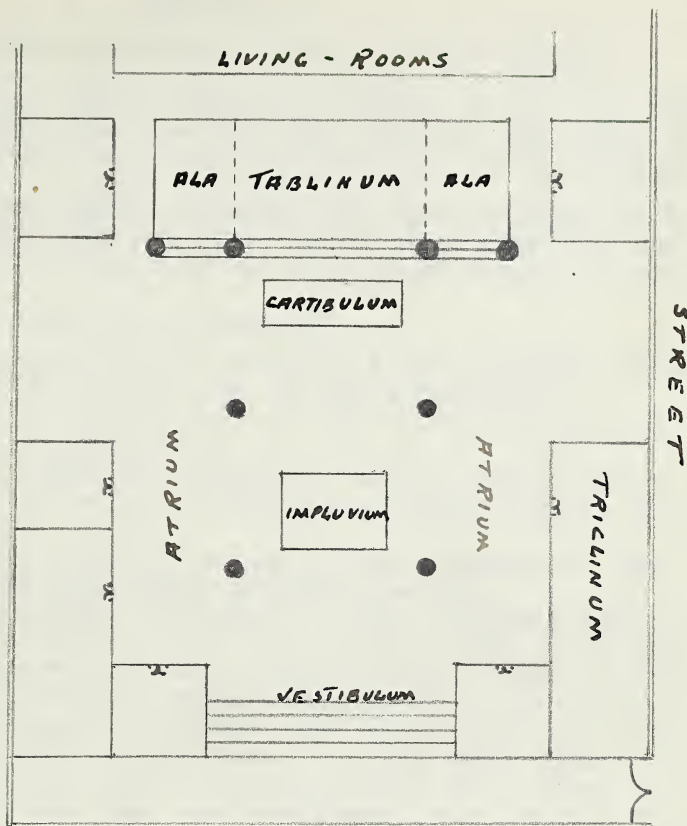
"The aim of the Church is to offer the worship of all creation and of all souls to God. When we say that worship is the final work of the Church we must ever remember that there is always something lacking in our offering to God if one soul, created by the Eternal Mercy and redeemed by the Eternal Love, lives in ignorance of that pity and grace, and one child of God suffers wrong or oppression. In order to fulfil her aim in worship the Church must strive for the evangelization of the world, for the creation of human brotherhood, for the destruction of all oppression, for the discovery of all truth and for the creation of all beauty that redeems and makes precious mortal life. So far from worship being simply a means to higher service, all service is but means to the highest worship, so that, through the purification of all life from sin and evil, and by the illumination of all life with truth and beauty, there may be offered to God the adoration of the creatures of His hand, and the Church's worship may be the Christ in Man at one with the Christ 'Who sitteth and reigneth at God's Right Hand.' " (2)

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(1) Waggett, P.N.: The Holy Eucharist - p.182.

(2) Hislop: Op.cit. pp. 22-3.

Appendix A



Ground Plan of a Roman House
(As in Dix: Shape of the Liturgy, p.22)

When the house was used by the church for worship, the President sat in the Tablinum, facing outwards, with his assistants on either side of him. There was no wall to the Tablinum on the side opening on to the Atrium. Low screens separated the Tablinum from the Alae, where, during the worship the widows and others sat. The Cartibulum was a stone table, and the Impluvium a fountain or pool no doubt used for Baptisms. The people sat or stood in the Atrium, men on one side, women on the other. In many of the later houses the alae were omitted and the tablinum had become semi-circular. The earliest churches now known were rectangular in form with semi-circular apsal ends. The Bishop's chair was in the centre of the apse, with his presbyters' places on either side of it. The altar stood on the axis of the apse.

Appendix B.

The Blessings at the Chaburah Supper

For the Wine: Blessed art Thou, O Lord our God, eternal King, Who createst the fruit of the vine. (Said by each person over the cup each time it was filled).

For the Bread: Blessed art Thou, O Lord our God, eternal King, Who bringest forth bread from the earth. (Said by the host in the name of all, as he broke the bread.)

At the end of the Supper:

Host: Let us give thanks (if one hundred persons were present he would add unto the Lord our God.)

Guests: Blessed be the Name of the Lord from this time forth for evermore.

Host: With the assent of those present (They indicate their assent) we will bless Him of Whose bounty we have partaken.

Guests: Blessed be He of Whose bounty we have partaken and through Whose goodness we live.

Host: Blessed art Thou, O Lord, Eternal King, Who feedest the whole world with Thy goodness, with grace, with loving-kindness and with tender mercy. Thou givest food to all flesh, for Thy loving-kindness endureth for ever. Through Thy great goodness food hath never failed us; O may it not fail us for ever, for Thy great Name's sake, since Thou nourishest and sustainest all living things and doest good unto all, and providest food for all Thy creatures whom Thou hast created. Blessed art Thou, O Lord, Who givest food unto all.

We thank Thee, O Lord our God, because Thou didst give as an heritage unto our fathers a desirable, good and ample land, and because Thou didst bring us forth, O Lord our God, from the land of Egypt, and didst deliver us from the house of bondage; as well for Thy covenant which Thou hast sealed in our flesh; for Thy Law which Thou hast taught us; Thy statutes which Thou hast made known unto us; the life, grace and loving-kindness which Thou hast bestowed upon us, and for the food wherewith Thou dost continually feed and sustain us, every day, in every season and at every hour. For all this, O Lord our God, we thank Thee and bless Thee. Blessed be Thy Name by the mouth of all living, continually and for ever; even as it is written "And thou shalt eat

and be satisfied, and thou shalt bless the Lord thy God for the good land which He has given thee." Blessed art Thou, O Lord, for the food and for the land.

(Another paragraph follows which scholars agree was probably added after A.D. 70. It is thought that in the time of Jesus the blessings as above were in use.)

--From Dix : Shape of the Liturgy, pp. 50-54.

Teaching of the Didache on the Eucharist

On the Lord's day of the Lord come together, break bread and hold Eucharist, after confessing your transgressions, that your offering may be pure. (From Chapter 14)

And concerning the Eucharist, hold Eucharist thus:
First, concerning the Cup:

We give thanks to Thee, our Father, for the Holy Vine of David Thy Child, which Thou didst make known to us through Jesus Thy child; to Thee be glory for ever.

And concerning the broken Bread:

We give Thee thanks, our Father, for the life and knowledge which Thou didst make known to us through Jesus Thy child. To Thee be glory for ever. As this broken bread was scattered upon the mountains, but was brought together and became one, so let Thy Church be gathered together from the ends of the earth into Thy kingdom, for Thine is the glory and the power through Jesus Christ for ever.

But let none eat or drink of your Eucharist except those who have been baptized in the Lord's name. For concerning this also did the Lord say, "Give not that which is holy to the dogs."

But after you are satisfied with food, thus give thanks:

We give thanks to Thee, O Holy Father, for Thy Holy Name which Thou didst make to tabernacle in our hearts, and for the knowledge and faith and immortality which Thou didst make known to us through Jesus Thy child. To Thee be glory for ever. Thou, Lord Almighty, didst create all things for Thy Name's sake, and didst give food and drink to men for their enjoyment, that they might give thanks unto Thee, but us has Thou blessed with spiritual food and drink and eternal life through Thy child. Above all we give thanks to Thee for that Thou art mighty. To Thee be glory for ever. Remember, Lord, Thy Church, to deliver it from all evil and to make it perfect in Thy love, and gather it together in its holiness from the four winds to Thy kingdom which Thou hast prepared for it. For Thine is the power and the glory for ever.

Leader: Let grace come and let this world pass away.

Worshippers: Hosannah to the God of David.

Leader: If any man be holy let him come! if any man be not let him repent! Maranatha.

Worshippers: Amen.

But suffer the prophets to hold Eucharist as they will.

(From MacDonald: Christian Worship in the Primitive Church--pp.129-30.)

Appendix D.

Prayer from the Epistle of Clement to the Corinthians.

LIX And we will pray that the Creator may preserve intact the number of his elect through Jesus Christ, who called us from darkness to light. Open our eyes, Lord, that we may know Thee, who alone art Holiest of the Holy and Highest of the high; who settest up and bringest low; who bestowest riches and poverty, life and death; who art the God of all spirits and of all flesh; whose eye is all-seeing, and whose power is omnipresent; who multiplieth the nations and gatherest together Thine elect in Christ. We beseech Thee, Lord, assist the needy, the oppressed, the feeble, Let all the nations know that Thou art God alone, and Jesus Christ is Thy Son, and we are Thy people, the sheep of Thy pasture.

LX Thou didst creat all things in the beginning, Thou that art faithful and righteous and marvellous in Thy strength, wise and prudent in Thy creative and sustaining energy, beneficent and steadfast to them that put their trust in Thee, merciful and full of compassion, forgive us all our offences. Reckon not every sin against Thy servants: but purify us with Thy truth and direct our steps in holiness. Make Thy face to shine upon us, and protect us with Thy mighty hand and Thine outstretched arm from them that hate us. Give peace to us and to all the inhabitants of the earth, as Thou gavest to our fathers when they called upon Thee.

LXI To our earthly rulers, O Lord, Thou has given the power, that we may render them due obedience in entire submission to Thy will. Therefore grant them health, peace, stability. For Thou, O sovereign of heaven and King of Eternity, givest honour and authority to the sons of men upon earth. So guide their counsels, that they may administer well the power thus entrusted to them, and may obtain Thy favour, O Thou, Who alone art able to do this and far more than this, we praise Thee through our High-priest Jesus Christ, through whom be glory to Thee for ever.

(From Lightfoot: The Apostolic Fathers, Part I, Vol.I, pp.171 ff.)

Appendix E

Eucharistic Prayer from the Liturgy of Hippolytus.

The Lord be with you.
And with thy spirit.

Lift up your hearts.
We lift them up unto the Lord.

Let us give thanks unto the Lord.
It is meet and right.

We give Thee thanks, O God, through Thy beloved Child Jesus Christ, Whom in the last days Thou didst send to us, a Saviour and Redeemer and Proclaimer of Thy purpose, the Word from Thee, through whom Thou didst make all things; Whom it pleased Thee to send from heaven into the womb of a virgin, and He was conceived and became flesh and was shown to be Thy Son, being born of the Holy Spirit and a virgin; Who, fulfilling Thy will and acquiring a holy people for Thee, stretched out His hands for suffering, that He might free from suffering those who believed in Thee.

Who, when He was betrayed to His voluntary suffering, that He might undo Death, and rend the bonds of the Devil, and tread down Sheol, and give light to the righteous, and fix the boundary, and reveal the resurrection, taking bread and giving thanks said:

Take, eat: this is my body which is broken for you.

Likewise also the cup, saying:

This is my blood which is shed for you: as often as ye do this ye do it in remembrance of me.

Remembering, therefore, His death and resurrection, we offer to Thee the bread and the cup, giving thanks to Thee for that Thou hast deemed us worthy to stand before Thee and minister unto Thee.

And we beseech Thee, that Thou wouldest send Thy Holy Spirit upon this oblation of Thy Church, and that, making it one, Thou wouldest grant it to all Thy holy ones who partake, that they may be filled with the Holy Spirit for the confirmation of faith in truth; that we may praise and glorify Thee through Thy Child Jesus Christ: through Whom to Thee be glory and honour, to Father and Son with the Holy Spirit, in Thy Holy Church, both now and for ever and ever.
Amen.

(From MacDonald: Christian Worship in the Primitive Church, pp. 163-4).

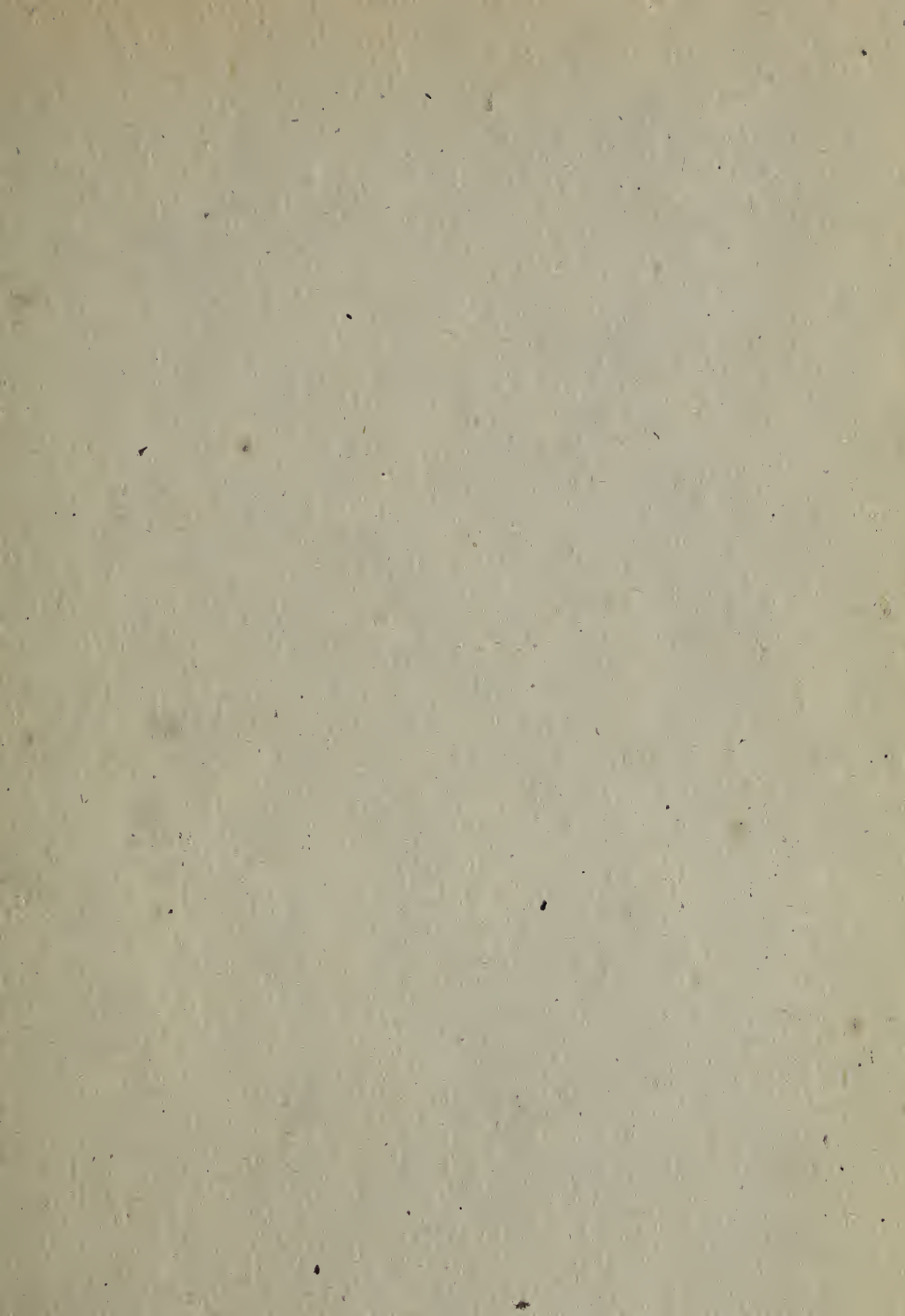
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